

TERROR



NO. 44
NOV.



10¢

TALES FROM THE

CRYPT

FEATURING...



THE CRYPT-KEEPER



THE OLD WITCH



THE VAULT-KEEPER



Jack Davis

PROOF... OF 8 BRANDS TESTED, PANIC IS BEST IMITATION OF MAD

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MORE OF **MAD**'S POTRZEBIE AND
FURSHLUGGINER THAN ANY
OTHER **MAD** IMITATION!



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FAIR IMITATION

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THE CRYPT OF TERROR

HEH, HEH! SLIDE INTO THE SLOPPY SLIMY *CRYPT OF TERROR*, FIEND-FANS. THIS IS YOUR CRAVEN CARETAKER OF COLD CORPSES, *THE CRYPT-KEEPER*, ALL READY TO START THE BRAWL ROLLING WITH A WHALE OF A TALE OF TERROR... A BIT OF BILGE I DUG UP FROM AMONG A BILE OF OLD MANUSCRIPTS THAT WERE CLUTTERING UP A CLAMMY CORNER OF MY CADAVER-CAVERN. YOU'LL RETCH AT THE WRETCHED GAG PLAYED BY *CAPTAIN MATT STARKE*... A SKUNK OF A SEAMAN WHO IS WAITING IN *EILEEN HARPER'S* MODEST APARTMENT OVERLOOKING THE SAN DIEGO DOCKS *RIGHT NOW* TO BEGIN THIS ODOROUS OPUS I CALL...

FOREVER AMBERGRIS

YEAH! *STARKE'S* THE NAME. CAP'N *MATT STARKE*, SKIPPER OF THE FREIGHTER *SULTANA*. I'M *ASHORE* NOW... HAPPY T' BE TAKIN' MY EASE ON THIS PLUSH SOFA... SNUG IN THIS NEAT LITTLE HARBOR-APARTMENT... BLOWIN' BILLOWS OF COOL BLUE SMOKE FROM THIS HAVANA FIFTY-CENTER... AN' DREAMIN' OF HOW I'LL SOON BE MASTER OF THE TRIMMEST LITTLE GAL IN THIS OR ANY PORT. I'M HAPPY 'CAUSE I *LOVE* *EILEEN* ENOUGH TO HAVE *MURDERED* A MAN T' GET HER! AND NOW...
SHE'S *MINE*...



YEAH! THAT'S RIGHT! I **MURDERED**... AND THERE IS **NOTHIN'** ANYONE CAN DO ABOUT IT. NOW, I'VE GOT THE **WORLD**. I'M **RICH**... AN' I'M WAITIN' FOR **EILEEN** T' COME OUT OF HER ROOM SO'S I'LL HAVE **EVERYTHING!** SCUSE ME...



HEY, EILEEN! BLAST IT! HURRY UP! STOP **TOR-TURIN'** ME. FINISH **DRESSIN'** AN' **C'MON** OUT OR I'LL COME IN THERE AN' GET YOU... **READY OR NOT!**



WAIT'LL YOU **SEE** HER! SHE'S **BEAUTIFUL!** GOT THE **PRETTIEST FACE** IN THE **WORLD!** AN' HER **FIGURE**... WELL... JUST WAIT AN' **SEE!** I OUGHT T' BE **HAPPY**... BUT SOMETHIN' KEEPS **NAGGIN'** AT ME... KEEPS **BOTHERIN'** ME!



I CAN'T FIGURE OUT **WHY** THAT **WHALE** **THREW UP** RIGHT THERE AND THEN... JUST WHEN I WAS **WATCHIN'** HIM. I NEVER **SAW** A **WHALE** **DISGORGE** BEFORE, NOR HAVE I HEARD OF ANYONE **ELSE** THAT'S SEEN IT HAPPEN.



NOW THERE'S A **QUEER** COMBINATION OF THINGS FOR A MAN IN LOVE T' BE THINKIN' OF... A **GORGEOUS WOMAN** AND... UGH... **WHALE SPEN!** BUT I CAN'T **HELP** IT. I GOT THE **SAME COLD FEELIN'** IN MY **INNARDS** AS I GET WHEN MY **SHIP** IS NEARIN' A **REEF** IN A **THICK FOG**. I CAN'T **SEE** THE **REEF** BUT **INSTINCT** TELLS ME IT'S THERE...



AN' SOME KIND OF **CRAZY INSTINCT** IS **NAGGIN'** AT ME **RIGHT NOW**. MAYBE YOU CAN **HELP** ME. LE'ME **TELL** YOU 'BOUT **EILEEN** AND ME... AND MY **SHIP**... AND THE **WHALE**... AN' THE **MAN I MURDERED**...



'BUT **WHERE** TO **BEGIN?** ON THAT **WARM SPRING MORNIN'**, I RECKON, WAS THE **START** OF IT. WE'D **DROPPED ANCHOR** HERE IN **SAN DIEGO** AND ME AND M' **FIRST MATE**, **BEN HARPER**, WERE **HURRYIN'** DOWN THE **GANG-PLANK**...



I WANT YOU TO **BUNK WITH US** THIS TIME, CAP'N. I WANT YOU T' **MEET EILEEN!**

ANOTHER TIME, MATEY! I GOT SOME **GOOD ADDRESSES** IN **DIEGO**...

'FOR **SEVEN MONTHS**... FROM THE TIME **BEN HARPER**'D SIGNED ON MY **SHIP**... ALL I'D HEARD FROM HIM WAS **EILEEN**... HOW **BEAUTIFUL** THIS **BRIDE** OF HIS WAS... AND HOW I HAD TO **MEET** HER...



WELL, HAVE **DINNER** WITH US THEN, **MATT**. AT **LEAST THAT**...

WELL, ALL RIGHT, **BEN**. BUT **JUST DINNER**. THEN I'LL BE ON MY **WAY!**

WITH **BEN HARPER** BEIN' THE KIND OF A **CHAP** HE WAS ... NOT AT ALL ON THE **RUGGED** SIDE... AND NOT MUCH ON **LOOKS** EITHER... I NEVER FIGURED HIM TO HAVE LANDED ANYTHING LIKE THE **BEAUTY** THAT GREETED HIM WHEN WE REACHED THEIR **APARTMENT**...



OH, **HONEY**... I THOUGHT THIS **TRIP** WOULD **NEVER END!**

IT'S GOOD TO HAVE YOU **HOME**, **BEN**, **DARLING**...

'BUT I COULD SEE FROM THE WAY THAT SHE TURNED HER HEAD SO'S HE COULDN'T KISS HER ON THE LIPS THAT EILEEN WASN'T AS GLAD TO SEE BEN AS SHE MADE OUT. FACT IS, AS HE WAS LOVIN' HER, SHE KEPT LOOKIN' PAST HIM TO ME...'

'SHE KEPT LOOKIN' AT ME...TALKIN' WITH HER EYES... FIRST CURIOSITY... THEN AN INVITATION... YEILDING. IT WAS AN ELECTRIC THING THAT PASSED BETWEEN US... SOMETHING WE BOTH UNDERSTOOD IN THOSE FIRST QUICK MOMENTS WITHOUT HAVING SPOKEN A WORD...'

'BEN INTRODUCED US, BUT I FELT I ALREADY KNEW HER BETTER'N HE DID. I FOLLOWED THEM INTO THE LIVIN' ROOM, WATCHIN' EILEEN, TAKIN' IN PARTS MOVIN' SENSUOUSLY. THERE WERE PICTURES BURNIN' IN M' BRAIN... TATOOED WITH A WHITE HOT NEEDLE...'

ALL THESE LONG MONTHS, BABY... YOU'VE BEEN WHAT I'VE THOUGHT ABOUT EVERY MINUTE... AWAKE OR ASLEEP...

MATT'S AGREED TO HAVE DINNER WITH US, HON... BUT HE WON'T STAY ON WITH US. HE'S GOT OTHER PLANS...

'BEN MOVED OFF TOWARDS THE KITCHEN...'

SEE IF YOU CAN'T DO SOMETHIN' ABOUT GETTIN' MATT TO STAY WITH US WHILE I GO MIX-UP SOME DRINKS...

SURE, BEN...

'EILEEN DID SOMETHIN', ALL RIGHT. SHE MOVED TOWARDS ME, SLOWLY, HER HIPS SWAYIN' EVER SO EASY. SHE KEPT LOOKIN' AT ME WITH THOSE SOFT, INVITIN' EYES. AND THEN SHE SPOKE WITH THAT SOFT, MELLOW, HONEY-FILLED, EXCITING VOICE...'

YOU... WILL... STAY... ON... WITH... US... WON'T YOU, MATT?

I... I...

'SEVEN MONTHS AT SEA WITHOUT SO MUCH AS GLIMPSIN' A WOMAN MAKES A MAN ACT WITHOUT THINKIN', I GUESS. I HAD A FRENZIED IMPULSE TO THROW MY ARMS AROUND EILEEN... PULL HER TIGHT AGAIN' ME... CRUSH MY HUNGRY LIPS AGAIN' HERS. AND SUDDENLY, I WAS DOIN' IT!...'

'SHE PULLED BACK AT FIRST, THEN CHANGED HER MIND, AND MOVED IN TIGHT. SHE MELTED... BLENDED... LIKE WE WERE ONE. THAT'S HOW QUICK WE HIT IT OFF TOGETHER, EILEEN AND ME! I WAS PANTIN' HEAVY AND WIPIN' HER LIPSTICK WHEN SHE TEASED...'

WHY'D YOU DO THAT, MATT?

'SHE KNEW WHY I DID IT, THE TANTALIZIN' DEVIL...SO I GAVE HER A FLIP ANSWER JUST AS BEN...POOR, STUPID, LOVESICK BEN...CAME IN WITH THE DRINKS...

...I HAVEN'T HAD A CHANCE TO KISS THE BRIDE BEFORE THIS!

HAH! I TOLD YOU YOU'D LIKE EILEEN, CAPN! GO ON... BE MY GUEST...

ER...I... I THINK I'VE TALKED MATT INTO STAYING, BEN...



'I GAVE EILEEN A BASHFUL PECK ON THE CHEEK AND BEN GRINNED, PLEASED AS PUNCH THAT I WAS PLEASED WITH HIS WIFE. PLEASED!? I WAS CRAZY ABOUT HER... TORTURED 'CAUSE BEN WAS ALWAYS CLOSE BY IN THE DAYS THAT FOLLOWED. BUT THEN, ONE DAY, I GOT A CHANCE TO TALK TO EILEEN...

WHY'D YOU MARRY HIM? YOU DON'T LOVE HIM!

THAT'S PUTTING IT BLUNTLY, ISN'T IT? WELL, I'LL GIVE YOU A BLUNT ANSWER! SECURITY!



BEN MAKES GOOD MONEY! HE NEVER SPENT MUCH BEFORE WE GOT MARRIED! HE MEANT SECURITY TO ME, MATT... A NICE HOME... CLOTHES... FOOD... EVEN THIS LITTLE CAR...

AND NOW...NOW THAT YOU'VE MET ME? I CAN SEE THE WAY YOU LOOK AT ME. YOU'RE IN LOVE WITH ME!

I DO LOVE YOU, MATT! I'VE NEVER MET A MAN I LOVED SO MUCH! BUT I WANT THE THINGS BEN'S MONEY GETS FOR ME.

AND I WANT YOU, EILEEN. I'M GOIN' T' HAVE YOU SOME- DAY, TOO! I DON'T KNOW HOW, BUT I WILL! I SWEAR IT...

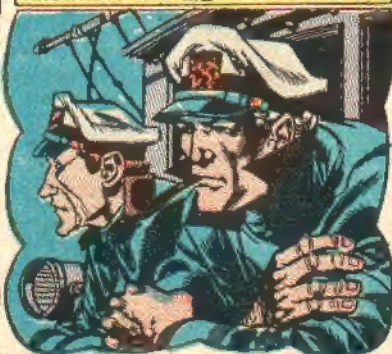


'THE TWO WEEKS SHOT BY AND IT WAS TIME TO SHOVE OFF AGAIN. I SAW EILEEN ONCE MORE THE WAY I DID THAT FIRST DAY... WITH BEN'S ARMS AROUND HER... SHE LOOKIN' OVER HIS SHOULDER. BUT THIS TIME, WHAT SHE SAID WAS MEANT FOR ME...

BE GOOD, BABY... GOODBYE, DARLING! I'LL BE COUNTING EVERY SECOND TILL YOU COME BACK TO ME...



'AND LATER, BEN AND I STOOD ON THE BRIDGE OF THE SULTANA, WATCHING SAN DIEGO VANISH INTO THE MIST, THERE WAS NO TALKIN' BETWEEN US... ONLY OUR QUIET THOUGHTS... HIM REMEMBERIN' THOSE SHORE NIGHTS WITH EILEEN... AND ME, HATIN' HIM FOR THEM, KNOWIN IT WAS ME SHE WANTED...



'AND I MADE UP MY MIND RIGHT THEN THAT MY FIRST MATE, BEN HARPER, WOULD NOT BE COMIN' BACK FROM THIS VOYAGE WITH ME...

Y'KNOW, CAPN! YOU OUGHT TO HAVE SOMEBODY LIKE EILEEN TO COME HOME TO!

MAYBE SO, BEN! MAYBE SO...



WHAT IS THERE ABOUT A MAN THAT LETS HIM LOVE ONE WOMAN... LONG FOR HER THE WHOLE TIME HE'S ASEA... AND THEN, NO SOONER 'N HE HITS PORT, SET ABOUT HUNTIN' FOR ANOTHER TO BE WITH. BEN AND ME WERE NO DIFFERENT... FROM BOMBAY TO OSAKA, JAPAN...



'AFTER A PLEASANT VISIT, I REMEMBERED OTHER BUSINESS THAT NEEDED TENDIN' TO... SO, SHOES IN HAND, I PADDED OVER TO A PAPER WALL AND CALLED OUT...

I'LL MEET YOU BACK AT THE SHIP, BEN.



THEN I VISITED A CERTAIN TOOTHY GENT WHO COULD FURNISH A LOT OF INFORMATION ABOUT A LOT OF THINGS, MOST OF THEM UNWHOLESOME. HE MARKED A CRUDE BLACK CIRCLE AROUND A TINY DOT ON A GREASY OLD MAP FOR WHICH I GAVE HIM ONE CRISP U.S. BUCK...

PLENTY PEOPLE ON ISLAND BUT IT IS NOT GOOD GO THERE, YES?



YEAH, GRAND-PA! THANKS!

I LEFT THE SHODDY LITTLE SHOP AND MADE MY WAY BACK THROUGH CROOKED JAMMED STREETS TOWARD THE SHIP, MY HEAD SPINNING WITH THOUGHTS OF EILEEN AND BEN AND HOW HE WASN'T GOIN' TO SEE HER AGAIN... NOT IF I GOT MY BUCK'S WORTH OF INFORMATION OUT OF THAT HISSIN', GRINNIN' OLD GENT...



'WE WERE UNDER WAY AGAIN BEFORE MIDNIGHT, BEN WAS LYIN' ON HIS BUNK, WEARY, BUT NOT TOO TIRED TO TALK ABOUT HIS FAVORITE TOPIC... EILEEN. I SAT AT MY DESK, STUDYING THE GREASY OLD MAP...

YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT A GOOD FEELING IT IS TO BE FINALLY GOIN' HOME TO HER, MATT... STRAIGHT HOME TO MY WAITIN' DARLING...

NOT STRAIGHT HOME, BEN. I'VE GOT ONE SHORT STOP TO MAKE!



WHAT'RE YOU TALKIN' ABOUT, MATT? OSAKA WAS OUR LAST PORT OF CALL...

THIS IS A PRIVATE DEAL, BEN. A FRIEND OF MINE IN BOMBAY ASKED ME TO DROP A BARREL OF FUEL OIL AT THIS LITTLE ISLAND. I PROMISED I WOULD...



'WE REACHED THE TINY SPECK OF FORSAKEN CORAL AND LAVA THE THIRD NIGHT OUT. EXCEPT FOR A GLIMMER OF LIGHT HERE AND THERE IN THE BLACKNESS, THERE WAS NO SIGN OF LIFE ON THE ISLAND. WHILE THE BARREL OF FUEL OIL WAS BEING LOADED INTO THE DINGHY, I ELECTED BEN TO TAKE IT ASHORE...

IS THERE TIME FOR ME TO DO SOME HUNTIN', SKIPPER?

HEH, HEH. OKAY, MATEY. I'LL WAIT FOR YOU...



'BEN'D REACTED EXACTLY AS I'D EXPECTED HIM TO REACT. I WATCHED HIM ROW ACROSS THE LAGOON TO A SMALL DOCK AND TIE-UP. A MINUTE LATER HE DISAPPEARED INTO THE DARK, RAT-INFESTED TOWN OF THE ORIENT'S ISLAND DUMPING GROUND FOR ITS CONDEMNED... CONDEMNED TO DEATH, THAT IS, BY BUBONIC PLAGUE! THE BLACK DEATH! ROTTING DEATH...'



'IT WAS ALMOST DAWN WHEN MY FIRST MATE RETURNED TO THE SHIP, EXHAUSTED BUT PLEASED WITH HIMSELF. HE'D HUNTED DOWN AND GOTTEN WHAT HE WANTED. HE'D GOTTEN MORE THAN HE WANTED! IT TOOK TWO DAYS, THEN BROKE OUT...'

...CAN'T PICK MYSELF UP OUT OF M' BUNK, MATT. HOT... FEVER... CHILLS. I'M SICK...

YOU'LL HAVE TO DOCTOR YOURSELF, BEN. WE'RE A THOUSAND MILES FROM THE NEAREST PORT...



'BEN CAME DOWN FAST. HE STARTED SWELLIN' AROUND HIS ARMPITS AND OTHER PLACES. SOON, A FESTERING, GREENISH-YELLOW SCURF COVERED HIM AND A STINKING, NAUSEATING SUBSTANCE OZZED FROM HIS FLESH. I KEPT CLEAR OF HIS QUARTERS FROM THEN ON AND ORDERED THE CREW TO DO THE SAME...'

'AT THE MENTION OF THE DREAD, HIGHLY CONTAGIOUS DISEASE, THE CREW PALED AND SHUDDERED AS ONE MAN, IT WAS PART OF MY PLAN LETTIN' THEM KNOW... REMINDIN' THEM... BUT ONE DAY, THEY FOUND SOMETHIN' ELSE TO OCCUPY THEIR MINDS. I FOUND 'EM TOSSIN' GARBAGE OVERBOARD...'

I KNOW THE SYMPTOMS... THE SCALY SKIN, POISONIN' OF THE BLOOD, AND THAT COUGH. THAT'S WHEN IT'S DANGEROUS. THE PLAGUE IS IN HIS LUNGS NOW. A MAN CAN CATCH IT EVEN TALKIN' T' HIM...

BUBONIC PLAGUE... GASP... THE BLACK DEATH!



WHAT'RE YOU MEN DOIN'?

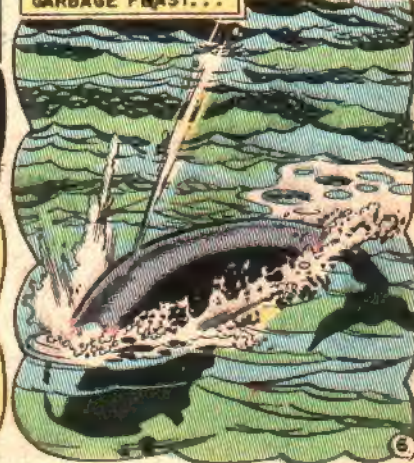
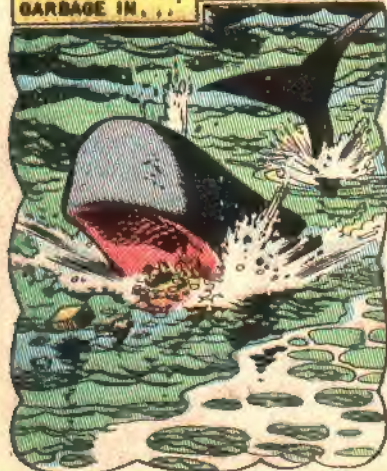
FEEDIN' THE WHALE, CAP'N STARKE. HE'S BEEN FOLLOWIN' US ALL MORNIN'! SEE?



'I'D SEEN WHALES BEFORE BUT NEVER SO CLOSE AS THAT GREAT BULL SPERM. HE KEPT UP WITH THE SHIP... OPENIN' HIS YAWNIN' CAVE OF A MOUTH TO LET THE GARBAGE IN...'

'WHAT KEPT BEN HARPER ALIVE, I'LL NEVER KNOW. MAYBE HE WAS RACIN' AGAINST DEATH JUST TO SEE EILEEN ONCE MORE. ANYHOW, THE NEXT FEW DAYS WERE TENSE ONES AND I TRIED TO RELAX BY TOSSIN' CHUNKS OF MOLDY BEEF AND OTHER REFUSE TO THE WHALE TAILIN' US...'

'THE WHALE STAYED WITH US. SOMETIMES HE'D ROLL AND DIVE AND WE WOULDN'T SEE HIM FOR HOURS. THEN SOMEBODY'D YELL "THAR'E BLOWS!" AND HE'D BE BACK CHASIN' ANOTHER GARBAGE FEAST...'



'AT NIGHT I'D GO OUT ON DECK, BREATHIN' IN THE SALTY WARM PACIFIC AIR, AND I'D THINK ABOUT ME AND EILEEN. I WAS THINKIN' OF HER THE NIGHT ONE OF THE MEN CAME A-RUNNIN' AND SCREAMIN'...

...HIS FACE IS ALL **ROTTEN BLACK**, CAP'N... AND HIS **FLESH IS MOVIN'** LIKE IT'S... **CHOKED**... **CRAWLIN' WITH MAGGOTS!**

BEN... OUT OF HIS ROOM! GOOD LORD! HOW COULD THE MAN WALK!?

'AND THEN, I SAW HIM! BEN WAS A WALKIN' DEATH... HIS BODY A MASS OF **BLACK ROT**... SMALL SPONGY CHUNKS DROPPIN' AWAY WITH EACH STIFF STAGGERIN' STEP HE TOOK. HIS CLOTHES WERE A TATTERED STINKIN' MESS OF GREENISH DRIED OOZE AND CONGEALED BLACK BLOOD. MY DINNER CAME UP SOUR IN MY THROAT...

CHOKED...

'I HOLLERED FOR SPOTLIGHTS AS HE STUMBLED ACROSS THE DECK. MEN CAME RUNNIN' WITH GAFFS, THEIR FACES TWISTED IN DISGUST. BEN KEPT SHUFFLIN'... COMIN' TOWARDS ME...

GET HIM OVER THE SIDE, YA BILGE LICE! DUMP HIM BEFORE HE HAS US ALL WASTIN' AWAY WITH THE BLACK ROT!

'THEY TRIED HOOKIN' THEIR **GAFFS** INTO BEN, BUT THE **TIPS** CAME AWAY WITH **HORRIBLE GOBS OF FOUL-SMELLING ROTTED FLESH**. THEY TRIED **SHOVIN'** WITH THE POLES. BEN GOT CUT IN **TWO** BY THE **RAIL**, WITH NO MORE SOUND THAN IF HE'D BEEN A **JELLYFISH**, AS HE WENT **OVERBOARD**...

'BY MORNIN', I FELT BETTER ABOUT THE WHOLE THING. WE'D LEFT WHAT WAS LEFT OF BEN HUNDREDS OF MILES BEHIND US AND I'D COMMITTED A MURDER NOBODY'D BE ABLE TO PIN ON ME. I HAD MY MIND ON LOVELY EILEEN WHEN TOM BALLARD, MY SECOND MATE CALLED ME TO THE RAIL...

OUR WHALE'S STILL WITH US, CAP'N!

THAT'S **RIGHT!** BUT HE'S ACTIN' **QUEER**... **ISN'T HE?!**

'AN' THAT'S WHEN IT HAPPENED! THE HUGE BULL SPERM SHUDDERED CONVULSIVELY, A TREMENDOUS YELLOW AND GREY BILLOWING MASS OF WAX-LIKE STUFF SPEWED OUT OF HIS CAVERNOUS MOUTH... BUBBLING... UNDULATING ON THE ROLLING SURFACE...

'**AMBERGRIS!** FLOATING GOLD! THE SPEW OF A SPERM WHALE... NEEDED FOR THE **BEST PERFUMES**. THAT FOUL-SMELLING, FATTY MESS WAS WORTH A **FORTUNE!**...

LET'S GET **OUT** OF HERE, CAP'N! THAT STENCH IS **CHOKIN'** ME!

NO! NO, BY HEAVENS! THAT'S WHALE SPEW... **AMBERGRIS!**

REVERSE ENGINES! PREPARE TO LOWER AWAY ALL BOATS! A HUNDRED DOLLAR BONUS TO EACH MAN WHO HELPS...

I EMPTIED A HUNDRED BARRELS OF MY FUEL OIL CARGO TO HOLO MY AMBERGRIS. A WEEK LATER WE DOCKED IN SAN DIEGO, WHERE I CAUGHT BLAZES FROM A PORT HEALTH OFFICIAL...BUT NOT UNTIL AFTER I'D DISPOSED OF THE AMBERGRIS...

COMING INTO PORT AFTER A PLAGUE DEATH ON YOUR SHIP MAY COST YOU YOUR PAPERS, CAPTAIN STARKE!

THE DEVIL WITH MY PAPERS. I'M A RICH MAN AND I'M GOING TO MARRY THE MOST BEAUTIFUL GIRL IN THE WORLD!

THE PERFUME MAKER NOT ONLY PAID ME SIXTY-TWO THOUSAND BUCKS FOR MY AMBERGRIS, BUT ALSO SENT ME A FLAGON OF THE SCENT MADE FROM IT. WHEN I FINALLY GOT OUT OF QUARANTINE, I BROUGHT IT TO EILEEN...

..I DON'T WANT TO HEAR HOW BEN DIED, MATT! ALL I KNOW IS...YOU ARE HERE... THAT'S ALL THAT MATTERS!

HERE, BABY! HERE'S ENOUGH PERFUME TO BATHE IN! AND IT'S ONLY THE BEGINNING!

SO THAT'S IT! NOW, EILEEN IS IN HER ROOM THERE, GETTIN' INTO 'SOMETHING COMFORTABLE', AS SHE PUT IT, WHICH IS PROBABLY A SHEER BLACK NEGLIGEE, AND I'M THINKING ABOUT WHY SOME STUPID WHALE THREW UP WHEN IT DID...



I OUGHT TO BE GLAD IT HAPPENED! IF IT HADN'T, I'D BE SIXTY-TWO THOUSAND DOLLARS POORER, AND... AND... OH, LORD!

BEN! THAT BLASTED WHALE MUST HAVE SWALLOWED THE BLACK-ROTTED DISEASED REMAINS OF BEN HARPER. THAT'S WHY HE THREW UP!



EILEEN! EILEEN, OPEN UP! QUICK! DON'T USE THAT PERFUME, EILEEN! DON'T USE IT!



EILEEN HARPER COMES OUT OF HER ROOM NOW, GRINNING IDIOTICALLY... THE BLACK SPONGY, ROTTING FLESH DROPPING FROM HER FACE...THE WHITE BONE GLEAMING THROUGH HERE AND THERE. CAPTAIN STARKE SCREAMS IN HORROR AT THE SIGHT AND STENCH OF HER...

WHY NOT, MATT? IT'S SUCH A LOVELY-SMELLING PERFUME... DARLING...

YAAAAHHGGH!



HEH, HEH! AND THAT'S THE LEAD-OFF YARN, YELP-HOUNDS. DID YOU NOTICE THAT EILEEN REALLY DIDN'T LIKE THE PERFUME MATT GAVE HER? DIDN'T YOU SEE THE WAY HER FACE DROPPED! WELL, I GOT A DATE WITH MY EDITORS TO PLAY A GAME OF

HEARTS. WE USE REAL ONES. I'LL BE BACK LATER WITH ANOTHER TERROR TOME. NOW I'LL TURN YOU OVER TO THE VAULT-KEEPER. BY THE WAY, THE WHALE IN THIS YARN WAS SORRY HE BROUGHT THE WHOLE THING UP! 'BYE NOW!



-THE END-

THE VAULT OF HORROR!

HEH, HEH! SEASICK, EH? GOOD! OLD MAL DEMER-RIER C.K. HAS SOFTENED YOU UP FOR THE CHILL! NOW YOUR VAULT-KEEPER IS READY TO PUT YOU ON ICE WITH A GRIPPINGLY GRAPHIC ACCOUNT OF A GREEDY BOON WHO DRUBBED HIS WAY INTO A DIVE! HE WAS A REAL GONE GUY WHEN HE WAS THROUGH SO COME INTO THE VAULT OF HORROR, AND LISTEN TO THIS EERIE EPISODE I CALL...

BURIAL at SEA

YOU'RE NAME IS BARNEY HOAG, YOU'VE ALWAYS CRAVED SOLITUDE AND NOW YOU'VE FOUND IT ON THIS BLEAK LONELY, WINDSWEPT, SUN-TORTURED FLORIDA KEY. . . THIS GRIM ACRE OF UNPEOPLED PARADISE. YOU GUIDE YOUR OLD CAR INTO A SANDY, BRISTLING PALMETTO PATCH, AND YOU UNLOAD YOUR GEAR. . .

IT'S... IT'S LIKE ANOTHER WORLD. MY OWN PRIVATE WORLD! IT'S JUST WHAT I'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR!



SWELTERING IN A SEA OF SWEAT, SAGGING UNDER THE LOAD OF FISHING TACKLE, BAIT BOX, FOOD HAMPER AND GALLON JUG OF WATER, YOU FIND TEMPORARY RELIEF IN THE SHADE OF GAUNT LONG-NEEDLE PINES AS YOU TRUDGE TOWARD THE GLARING WHITE BEACH.



YOU PASS A LINE OF SILENT PALMS LEFT LEANING LANDWARD BY SOME LONG AGO VIOLENT WIND THAT HAD ONCE ROARED BY. AND, UNLOADING YOUR EQUIPMENT ONTO THE BURNING SAND, YOU STUDY THE CURIOUSLY-SHAPED GROTESQUE MANGROVE TREES, THEIR EXPOSED SNAKELIKE ROOTS INTERTWINING, GROWING FROM THE BRINE AT THE SHORE...



YOU TURN AT THE SOUND AND SEE NO FISH, BUT AN ALMOST-NAKED, BEARDED, BERRY-BROWN OLD MAN WITH GREY HAIR DOWN TO HIS SHOULDERS EMERGE FROM THE DEPTHS AND MAKE HIS WAY TOWARD THE BEACH...



THEN, BARNEY HOAG, YOU SWEAR UNDER YOUR BREATH!... BECAUSE YOU ARE NO LONGER ALONE. YOUR SOLITUDE IS GONE. YOU BEGIN TO REEL IN... TO LEAVE IN DISGUST... WHEN YOU FEEL THE SUDDEN, STRONG TUGGING ON YOUR LINE...



THE FISH BREAKS WATER, STRUGGLING TO SPIT OUT THE HOOK AND YOU SEE THAT IT IS A BARRACUDA. FINALLY, YOU BRING THE VICIOUS SCOUNDREL OF THE SEA TO LAND YOU STARE DOWN AT YOUR GASPING CATCH, SHIVER AT THE SIGHT OF ITS BARED RIPSAP TEETH...

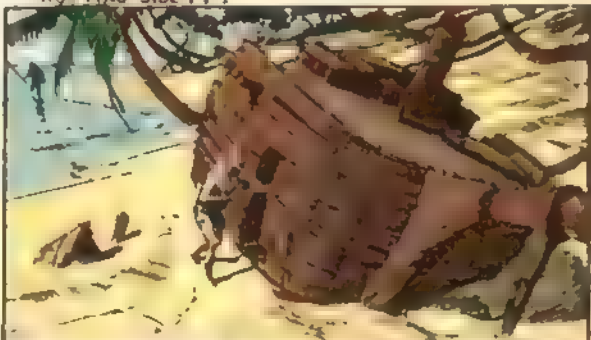


DEVIL! WELL, YOU'RE THROUGH SCARING AWAY GOOD-EATING FISH!

BEYOND, THE TURQUOISE ATLANTIC RESTS TRANQUILLY BETWEEN TIDES. SOON, HOOK BAITED, FEET BARED, YOU TREAD FAR OUT OVER THE SAND AND CORAL BOTTOM BEFORE REACHING KNEE-HIGH WATER. YOU BEGIN TO SURF-CAST AND ALL IS PEACE AND QUIET EXCEPT FOR THE SOUND OF A FISH NEARBY, LEAPING FROM THE SEA...



YOU STAND, STARING, AS HE MOVES SOUNDLESSLY ACROSS THE SAND TO THE BROKEN HULK OF AN ANCIENT VESSEL THAT HAD BEEN TOSSED, HALF-HIDDEN, AMONG THE PALMS. AS YOU WONDER WHY YOU HADN'T NOTICED THIS GRIZZLED WRECK BEFORE, THE OLD MAN VANISHES INTO IT THROUGH A CRUOE DOORWAY CUT INTO ITS ROTTING SIDE...



YOU PACK AND LEAVE YOUR SHATTERED PARADISE, GRATIFIED AT LEAST, THAT THE OLD MAN HADN'T SEEN YOU AND SUBJECTED YOU TO ENDLESS, BORING TALK. SUDDENLY, A LONG BLACK SHADOW FALLS ACROSS YOUR PATH. A THIN, PIPING VOICE BRINGS YOU UP SHORT...



YOU TURN NOW, BARNEY, FACING THE GRIZZLED OLD MAN. NUDE, EXCEPT FOR A TATTERED FILTHY PAIR OF DUCK PANTS THAT REEK OF DEAD FISH, HE POINTS A RUSTY, AGED MUSKET AT YOUR CHEST.

YOU HEERED ME, MISTUH! I COME FUST TO THIS PROMPTY, SO IT'S MINE! NOW GIT, 'FORE I BLAST YUH CLEAN T' KINGDOM COME!



YOUR FRIGHT OF THIS FRIZZLED OLD MAN WITH THE ANCIENT WEAPON GIVES WAY TO ANGER AT HAVING BEEN CHEATED OF YOUR LONGED-FOR SOLITUDE...

I WAS GOING, YOU DIRTY OLD COOT.. BUT NOW I GOT A MIND TO STAY!

TRY STAYIN', MISTUH, AN' I'LL BE CUTTIN' YUH UP FER SHARK BAIT!



THERE'S A COLD GLINT IN HIS ICE-BLUE EYES, AND HIS SUN-BRONZED CROSS-HATCHED SKIN DRAWS TAUT ACROSS HIS JAWS. YOU RELENT IN THE FACE OF THE WEAPON IN THE OLD MAN'S TIGHTENED GRIP AND YOU MOVE OFF ANGRILY THROUGH THE PINES...

BOILING WITH RESENTMENT, YOU STOW YOUR GEAR INTO YOUR CAR. THEN YOU GAZE BACK TOWARDS THE BEACH, UNWILLING TO BOW TO THE OLD ONE'S ILL WILL...



HE BLUFFED ME AWAY, BUT I'M NOT LEAVING!

I'LL SHOW THAT OLD CRANK. I'LL BURN 'IM OUT. I'LL SET FIRE TO THAT FILTHY WRECK HE LIVES IN AND I'LL BURN HIM OUT FOR GOOD!



SLOWLY, SILENTLY, STEALTHILY YOU MAKE YOUR WAY BACK TO THE BARNACLE AND SALT-ENCRUSTED WOODEN CARCASS OF HALF A ONCE-PROUD VESSEL. YOU'RE FILLED WITH VINDICTIVENESS AND CURIOSITY YOU STOP OUTSIDE THE ROTTED DOOR. A METALLIC GLEAM CATCHES YOUR EYE...



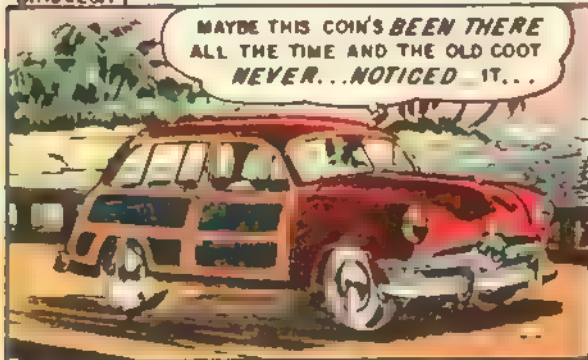
WHAT... WHAT'S THAT? ON THE SAND! LOOKS LIKE A...A...

YOU PICK UP THE GLITTERING OBJECT. YOU STUDY IT, TURNING IT OVER IN YOUR HAND.

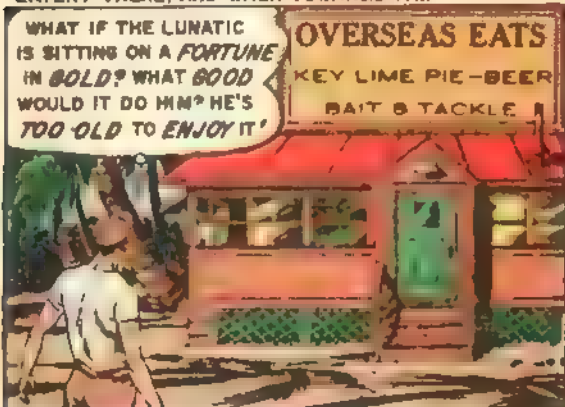
IT IS! IT'S A GOLD COIN! REAL GOLD!



YOUR FIRST REACTION IS TO GET AWAY WITH YOUR PRIZE. YOU HURRY, STUMBLING, TO YOUR CAR...THE ANCIENT GOLD DOUBLOON CLUTCHED TIGHTLY IN YOUR SWEATY PALM. YOU DRIVE HASTILY OFF THE LONELY KEY, SPEEDING NORTHWARD ACROSS THE OVERSEAS HIGHWAY BRIDGES...



YOU EASE UP ON THE GAS, YOU STOP RUNNING. YOU THINK SOME MORE AS YOU CRUISE SLOWLY NORTHWARD. SOON, YOU REACH ANOTHER KEY, ROLL UP TO AN EATERY THERE, AND WALK TOWARDS IT...



SO, BARNEY MOAG, GREED AND DETERMINATION ETCH THEMSELVES INTO YOUR FACE... AS YOU MAKE YOUR DECISION...



ISN'T THAT RIDICULOUS, BARNEY? THINK AGAIN. THAT'S IT? NOW YOU'VE GOT IT...



YOU SIT AT A FLY-FLECKED COUNTER...STARING AT THE MENU...HARDLY SEEING IT...



YOU ARRIVE BACK AT "THE OLD MAN'S KEY" ALONG WITH THE NIGHT...PARK AS YOU DID THAT MORNING AMONG THE PALMETTOS...AND, TAKING A JACKHANDLE, YOU QUIT YOUR CAR...



QUIET WHISPERINGS IN THE PINES ACCOMPANY YOUR SLOW APPROACH TO THE BEACH. THE ELEGANT CHIRPS OF CICADAS SURROUND YOU. WITHIN, YOU FEEL THE RAPID THUMPING OF YOUR HEART. A RISING GIBBOUS MOON LIGHTS YOUR WAY TO THE SAD HULK AMONG THE PALMS ON THE BEACH.



NOW YOU ARE THERE, BARNEY YOUR HEAVY BREATHING BLENDING WITH THE BREEZE BLOWN PALM FRONDS THAT SOUND SO MUCH LIKE A SUMMER SHOWER, AND WITH THE GENTLE LAP- PING OF THE SURF UPON THE NEARBY SHORE. A SOFT ORANGE LIGHT GLIM- MERS THROUGH A CRACK IN THE DOOR. YOU PEER IN...

YOU SEE HIM IN THE FLICKERING CANDLE GLOW, HIS MAD EYES GLEAM- ING AS HE LETS A TRICKLE OF GOLD COINS FALL THROUGH HIS GNAILED FINGERS INTO A WOODEN BOX ON THE ROUGH TABLE AT WHICH HE SITS. THE FAINT CHING OF CLINKING METAL

THE ELEMENT OF SURPRISE, BARNEY! SLAM OPEN THE DOOR! THAT'S IT! SCARED ALMOST OUT OF HIS WITS, THE OLD MAN DROPS HIS TREASURE INTO A DIRTY WRINKLED CLOTH AND BALLS IT UP IN HIS TREMBLING HANDS.



YEAH, YOU WEATHER- BEATEN OLD MISER! YOU DO HAVE MORE GOLDPICES!

MUM? WHAT ARE YOU TALKIN' 'BOUT, MISTUM? WHAT YUM WANT HERE?

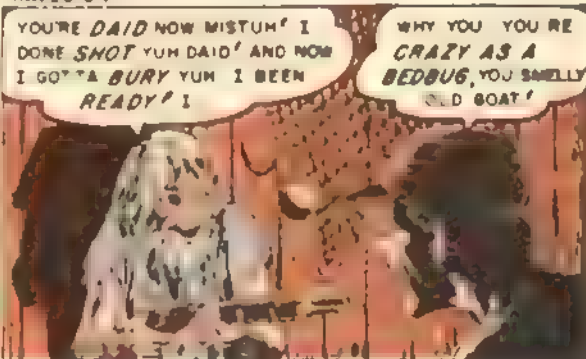
YOU STEP TOWARD HIM. THE OLD MAN DROPS HIS RAG- WRAPPED TREASURE OF DOUBLOONS TO THE FLOOR. THEN, BENDING AS THOUGH TO RETRIEVE THEM, HE COMES UP AGAIN, THE RUSTED OLD MUSKET IN HIS BONY PAWS POINTED AT YOUR HEAD.



SEE, MISTUM? I'VE BEEN WAITIN' FOR YUM FOR YEARS! I KNOW'D YUM COME AN TRY AN' STEAL MY TREASURE, SO I PREPARED I PREPARED EVVYTHIN'!

NO! WAIT! DON'T

THE OLD MAN CHORTLES, PULLS BACK HIS FOREFINGER, SQUEEZING THE MUSKET'S TRIGGER. BUT NOTHING HAPPENS. NO BLAST. NO SHOT. NOTHING. THE BOLT, FROZEN BY YEARS OF RUST, DOESN'T MOVE. A COLD TWISTED GRIN WREATHES YOUR SWEAT-STAINED FACE AS HE RAVES ON.



YOU'RE DAID NOW MISTUM! I DONE SHOT YUM DAID! AND NOW I GOTTA BURY YUM I BEEN READY! I

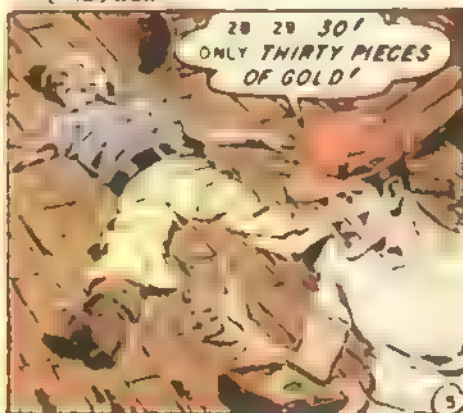
WHY YOU YOU'RE CRAZY AS A BEDBUG, YOU SMELLY OLD BOAT!

YOU LEAP AT HIM, BRINGING THE IRON JACKHANDLE DOWN ON HIS SKULL, FEELING THE CRUSHING OF BONE.



I'M PREPARED! UNNNNGGGG

YOU PICK UP THE BUNDLE AND EMPTY THE COINS INTO THE MISER'S BOX, THROWING THE RAG AWAY.



20 20 30! ONLY THIRTY PIECES OF GOLD!

AGAIN AND AGAIN YOU STRIKE. HE SINKS, LIFELESS, TO THE FLOOR. THEN ONE MORE TERRIBLE BLOW AS HE LIES THERE. JUST TO MAKE SURE AND HIS BRAWNS SPATTER ABOUT THE WORN-EATEN BOARDS...

YOU SCRABBLE ABOUT THE BRINE-POULED WRECK...ANGRY...ANGRILY SEARCHING



THERE *MUST* BE MORE!
THERE'S *GOT* TO BE MORE!

BUT YOU'VE GOT IT ALL, BARNEY, AND KNOWING THAT, YOU SAG TO THE FLOOR, SICK AND TIRED WITH DISAPPOINTMENT. BUT THE OLD MAN'S PIECE OF DIRTY CLOTH CATCHES YOUR EYE. . .



DOTTED LINE... MARKED "110 YARDS"... TO A BIG "X"... FROM A LINE MARKED "LOW TIDE"... AND AN ARROW MARKED "N"! BY GOD! IT'S A MAP!

WELL, I'LL BE...! IT'S A TREASURE MAP THE OLD MAN MADE IT IT *MUST* BE WHERE THE OTHER HALF OF THIS SHIP IS, THAT'S WHAT IT MUST BE! YEAH! SURE! A PIRATE SHIP...BROKEN IN TWO BY A HURRICANE! HALF SUNK! HALF WASHED ASHORE... THIS HALF!



THAT'S WHAT HE WAS DOIN' WHEN HE WAS COMIN' OUT OF THE WATER. HE WAS BRINGING BACK THESE COINS FROM THE SUNK HALF OF THE WRECK! IT'S OUT THERE!



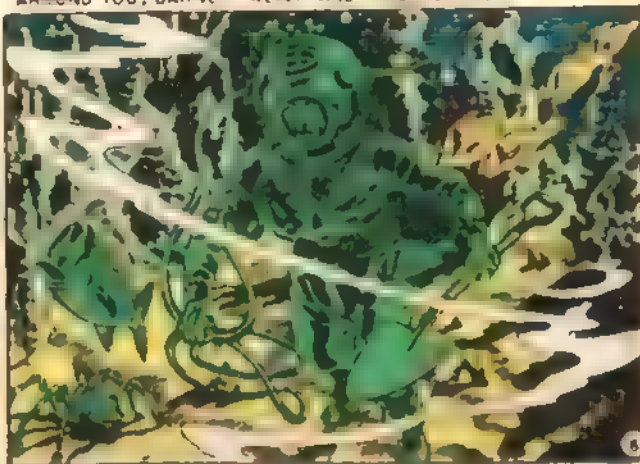
SLOWLY, BARNEY SLOW NOW THINK IT OUT YOU'RE ON TO SOMETHING! JUST THINK IT OUT CAREFULLY. BLOW OUT THE OLD MAN'S LANTERN. THAT'S IT! NOW GO OUTSIDE. LOOK OUT THERE. AT THE SEA . .



I'M NOT MUCH OF AN UNDERWATER SWIMMER! BUT I MAY BE ABLE TO RENT A DIVING SUIT SOMEWHERE! YEAH! I'LL DRIVE TO KEY WEST. . .

SO YOU DRIVE ALL NIGHT, BARNEY, AND YOU'RE IN KEY WEST WHEN DAWN LIGHTS THE SKY. BY LATE AFTERNOON, YOU'RE BACK AT THE "OLD MAN'S KEY" WITH A DIVING SUIT, ENOUGH HOSE TO GO OUT 110 YARDS, A GASOLINE-DRIVEN COMPRESSOR, THE WORKS. BREATHING WITH EXCITEMENT, YOU TAKE A SPADE AND START PACING OUT INTO THE SURF

DEEPER AND DEEPER YOU GO...OUT UNDER THE ROLLING BREAKERS OUT INTO THE SEA AND THE SEA IS ALIVE AROUND YOU, BARNEY ALIVE AND FRIGHTENING



YOU GO OUT PAST THE MAP'S 110 YARDS AND THE SEA AROUND YOU IS FULL OF WONDERS, BARNEY...BUT NO BROKEN PIRATE HULL...NO SUBMERGED HALF-HULK DO YOU SEE

I MUST'VE BEEN **CRAZY** TO TAKE THAT OLD COOT'S MAP SERIOUSLY'Z.



AND THEN YOU SEE IT, RISING LIKE A SHADOW AHEAD OF YOU. THE MARKER

THAT'S IT! THAT'S IT! THERE AIN'T NO BOAT. HE'S HAD THE TREASURE. HE WASN'T BRINGIN' IT OUT! HE WAS BRINGIN' IT IN... HERE... BURYIN' IT!



THERE, SIX FATHOMS DOWN, BEFORE THE ALGAE AND MOSS-ENCRUSTED MARKER, YOU BEGIN TO DIG. YOU DIG DOWN AND YOU DIG OUT... AN OBLONG, EMPTY HOLE WITH NO COBBLE, NO CHEST, NOTHING. YOU CLIMB OUT, BITTER WITH FRUSTRATION...

MAYBE THE MARKER **SHOWS** WHICH SIDE TO DIG ON. I'LL JUST SCRAPE OFF THE SLIME...



WITH YOUR SPADE, YOU SCRAPE OFF THE GREEN ALGAE AND MOSS AND SLIME. AND YOU TURN COLD, STAGGERING BACK IN A FRENZY AT WHAT YOU SEE



NO! NO! GOOD LORD!

YOUR AIRLINE FOULS AROUND THE MARKER, STOPPING YOU FROM RUNNING, TERRORIZED, YOU YANK AT THE RUBBER TUBE. THE MARKER TILTS FORWARD, SLOWLY...FALLING AS IF IN SLOW MOTION



..PINNING YOU DOWN INTO THE HOLE YOU'VE DUG. PINNING YOU DOWN INTO YOUR GRAVE. FOR YOU KNOW THAT BEFORE LONG, THE GAS IN THE COMPRESSOR OUT ON THE SHORE WILL RUN OUT AND THE AIR WILL BE GONE AND YOU'LL SUFFOCATE. THE **OLD MAN**. THE **CRAZY OLD MAN**! HE WAS **RIGHT**! HE **DID** KNOW! HE **WAS** PREPARED! THE LETTERS CUT INTO THE MARKER LAUGH AT YOU



HEH, HEH! LIKE THEY SAY, KIDDIES! BARNEY DUG HIS HOLE... NOW HE'S DYING IN IT. HE **THIRSTED** AFTER GOLD AND SETTLED FOR A **BELLYFUL** OF SALT WATER. WELL, THAT'S MY TREASURE-TERROR-TALE FOR THIS ISSUE OF **G.K.'S MORBID**

MAG. NOW I'LL TURN YOU **BACK** TO HIM FOR A TALE ABOUT A **BLONDE FLIRT** WHO FINALLY MADE SOME **DESSERT**. **CURIOUS? GOOD!** I'LL SEE YOU NEXT IN MY **MAG**, THE **VAULT OF HORROR**! 'BYE, NOW!





GUNMAN



With the cardboard carton propped against the wall, Ed Grant pressed the door buzzer: chimes rang inside the apartment and footsteps scurried toward him. The safety latch scraped open, the door swung wide and Ed Grant stepped into the apartment, pushing the carton in front of him. "What... what's *this*?" the woman asked in surprise, pointing to the carton.

"Delivery." Ed Grant answer, kicking the door shut with his heel. He slipped the latch into place and dumped the carton on the floor. "B-But I didn't order any..." the woman protested. Then she saw the gun Ed Grant held. "You... a..."

"A guy working his way through college," Ed Grant said flatly. "Don't make me flunk you on this test, lady... I want all the-cash and jewelry you got here!"

Grant heard a high-pitched voice coming along the corridor from one of the bedrooms, and he turned warily. A tow-headed five-year-old careened into the room, deeply involved in banking an imaginary aircraft he was piloting. He stopped in his tracks, his mouth gaping. "Hey!" he whinnied. "Who's this, mom?"

"L-Look, mister," the woman pleaded. "We don't have much money, see? My husband's only a lab assistant at the chemical plant on River Street. He just got outa school himself, and..."

"*Can* it!" Ed Grant snapped. "C'mon... the CASH! Where's it at?"

The kid, who had sauntered over to the foyer table, suddenly pulled a cap pistol from a toy holster slung over the chair and whirled toward Ed Grant. His finger squeezed the trigger and his high-pitched voice exploded in a series of raucous gunshot sounds. Ed Grant started at the sound, then began to laugh deep in his throat. "The kid's a li'l whacky, ain't

he?" he snickered. Then, nudging her toward the kitchen with his gun, he added, "Let's find that dough, sister!"

While the woman nervously pulled a purse from a kitchen drawer, the kid grabbed a tiny telephone buried in a toy box and yelped into the receiver: "Sheriff! Amble over here pronto! Varmint's robbin' my mom!"

Ed Grant tilted his head far back, opened his mouth and roared with delight till tears came to his eyes. For several minutes he shook with uncontrolled mirth. Subsiding slowly, he wiped his eyes with the back of his hand. "The li'l nut," he chortled. "A real character, ain't he? Right outa television!"

The kid's face clouded and he ran from the room. A moment later, as Ed Grant peered into the purse he had grabbed, the boy returned. He held a small water pistol. Ed turned, started to guffaw again. "Jerko, here," he exploded. "A reg'lar half-pint hero, ain't he?"

The boy's face tightened... he squeezed the trigger and a stream of smoky fluid sprayed into Ed Grant's face. He dropped his gun and a shriek of horror poured from Ed Grant's seared lips. He staggered backwards, his eye-sockets raw cavities where the eyeballs had just been burnt out of his head. One trembling hand went to his face... passed over the ruined flesh, which was curling away with a bubbling sound, revealing stark yellowish bones beneath. Ed Grant screeched in agony, his face already a ghastly oozing wound. He sagged to the floor.

The boy felt his mother's arm tugging him sharply, as she yanked the water pistol from him. "Just wait till I tell your daddy what you just did!" she snapped. "He told you a hundred times never to fill your gun with his *sulfuric acid*!"

NOW...IF YOU JOIN...YOU GET THE BULLETIN...FREE!



YES, FANS... YOU, TOO, CAN BE LUCKY LIKE MELVIN, HERE! YOU, TOO, CAN COMPLETE YOUR COLLECTION OF E.C.'S! YOU, TOO, CAN JOIN THE

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THE E.C. FAN-ADDICT CLUB
 ROOM 706
 225 LAFAYETTE STREET
 NEW YORK, 12, N.Y.

So here's my 50¢! So I could've joined for half the price a couple of months back! So now I get a bulletin subscription. So who says I want it. So I'm a sucker. So put me down and send me the stuff what the kids wearing and the bulletin I don't want but I'm paying for...

NAME _____
 ADDRESS _____
 CITY _____
 STATE _____ ZONE NO. _____

[®] (SO BIRD'S GONNA FOOT THE BILL FOR THE BULLETINS, WHY? SURE WE HAD TO RAISE THE PRICE! SO BUE UP!)

[®] (NO 25¢ MEMBERSHIP WILL BE ACCEPTED AFTER JUNE 1, 1954)

THE CRYPT-KEEPER'S CORNER

Heb, heh! Here comes our morbid mailman with the latest sack of sordid stamped squares containing crude correspondence from you creeps. So I'll just stick my boney paw into the... YEEEEEROWWW! Hm-mmmp! Very funny! Somebody sent a large scorpion in a small envelope. A stinging trick! Where was I? Oh, yes... so I'll just stick a pair of tweezers into the old mail sack and print a few poems and stuff for your perusal.

Imre Horvath of The Bronx, N. Y. pens this Putrid Parody to the tune of "I'm Looking Over A Four-Leaf Clover":

I'm running you over
With a sharp lawn mower
That I never used before
The first blade's for chopping.
The second will hack,
The third will disjoin
Your head from your neck
No need explaining.
The one remaining
You won't hear anymore
I'm running you over
With a sharp lawn mower
That I never used before

From the creative claw of John M. Guite who lives in a box in Waterville, Me. comes this Scream Song Satire of the tune "Heart of my Heart":

Part of my heart,
I love that arterie
Part of my heart,
Bring back a vein to me.
When we were kids
On the corner of the street.
We were rough and ready guys,
But, oh, how we could handle knives
Part of my heart
Meant friends were gorier then
Too bad we had to part
I know a tear would glisten
If once more I could listen
To that gang that ate part of my heart.

This next Ludicrous Lyric is the brainwork of Conrad J. Polk, of Chicago, Ill. who pokes fun at the tune "Singing in the Rain" with these warped words:

I
I'm swinging in the rain.
Just swinging in the rain
What a ghastly old feeling,
My neck's stretched again
My eyes bulge with pain,
As I gurgie this refrain.
I'm swinging, swingin in the rain

II

The trap has been sprung,
My neck has been wrung,
My tongue is just dancin',
I know that I'm done
My face is all red,
I know that I'm dead,
I'm swinging, swinging in the rain

Clara Estelle Crossland of McKeesport, Pa. who claims to be a poet in the strictly artistic sense of the word, submits this lovely little sentiment to pluck your heart strings:

My boyfriend is a charming thing
I love him 'cause he is so sweet
One side of his ugly face is gone,
The other hangs with rotted meat.

Raymond Newman of Chicago, Ill. writes these poetic wishes:

Oh, for the life of a vampire,
That's what I really crave.
To prowle the face of earth at night,
And sleep each day in a grave

John Noidkowski of Maspeth, N. Y. decries his fate with this gem:

Blood and Guts
All over the street,
And me without
A spoon to eat.

Paul Block and Douglas Tuchman (they had to collaborate on this epic, yet) of Elmhurst, N. Y. knock a famous nursery rhyme with:

Hickory Dickory-Do
The man went down the croc

Well, enough art. Now for a letter

Dear Crypt-Keeper,

I was walking down the street reading my latest E.C., when all of a sudden there was a scream, a scream, and a man lay on the road. He had been hit by a car. The car sped away. I ran over to see what I could do. The man lay there and said, "I'm dying! Help me!" So I helped him. My sentence is going to be carried out next Monday.

Bob Wilson
Niagara Falls, N. Y.

And now, in the space left, the commercials. A subscription to this mag will set you back \$1.00 for eight issues... manila envelopes... and all that rot. The address for sub orders, poetry, comments, and criticisms is:

The Crypt-Keeper
Room 706, Dept. 44
225 Lafayette Street
NYC 12, N.Y.

HERE'S A TERROR-TALE OF A
CHICK WHO FINALLY WORMED

The PROPOSAL



PEARL HAD ALWAYS LIKED LIVING IN THE BEST OF STYLE WITH FINE CLOTHES, JEWELRY, A PARK AVENUE APARTMENT, AND A CHAUFFEURED CADILLAC. AND PEARL HAD ALWAYS MANAGED TO FIND RICH HUSBANDS WHO WOULD BE WILLING TO KEEP HER IN THE STYLE TO WHICH SHE'D BECOME ACCUSTOMED. LIKE FREDDY HOWELL, FOR INSTANCE, FREDDY HOWELL WAS PEARL'S LATEST RICH-HUSBAND-BANKROLL. HE WAS, THAT IS, UNTIL HE ANNOUNCED

WE'RE THROUGH, PEARL.
I'M GOING BACK TO
MY WIFE!

GASP! WHY
#MY, YOU
CHEAP NO-
GOOD



NOW, FREDDIE WAS GONE. PEARL HAD LOST ANOTHER BILL-PAYING HUSBAND, AND THE WOLF WAS AT THE PENTHOUSE DOOR. PEARL WAS DESPERATE. A DOZEN DESPERATE PLANS WERE FORMULATED IN HER PRETTY RED HEAD AND DISCARDED BEFORE SHE REMEMBERED THE QUIET, GENTLE, LONELY MAN ACROSS THE HALL.

OF COURSE! HE MUST HAVE MONEY,
OR HE COULDN'T AFFORD TO LIVE
IN THIS GLORIFIED CAVES. HE'LL BE
A PUSHOVER FOR LITTLE PEARL.



SHE WRAPPED HER FLIMSY BLACK NEGLIGEE AROUND HER SHAPELY FIGURE AND STEPPED BOLDLY INTO THE HALL AS HOWARD ELLIS LOCKED HIS APARTMENT DOOR BEHIND HIM AND TURNED TO THE ELEVATOR.

I BEG YOUR PARDON, BUT DO
YOU HAVE THE TIME? MY WATCH
SEEMS TO HAVE STOPPED.

IT'S GULP
IT'S NINE-
THIRTY



PEARL LET HOWARD STARE SHE LET HIS EYES TRAVEL OVER HER FULL YOUNG BODY JUST LONG ENOUGH. THEN, SHE PUT ON THE SHY EMBARRASSMENT ACT...

OH, I I'M TERRIBLY SORRY, MR. MR. ...WHY, WE'RE NEIGHBORS, AND I DON'T, EVEN KNOW YOUR NAME! I'M PEARL DRAKE! MISS PEARL DRAKE!

ELLIS! HOWARD ELLIS! I... I ...WELL, HERE'S THE ELEVATOR!

PEARL INWARDLY CURSED THE HIGH SPEED CONVEYANCE THAT HAD RUSHED UPWARD THROUGH THE STEEL THROAT OF THE BUILDING AND INTERRUPTED HER PROGRESS. SHE TURNED AND GLIDED BACK TO HER APARTMENT AS THE ELEVATOR DOORS CLOSED...

GOOD MORNING, MR. ELLIS... AND THANK YOU FOR THE TIME!

NOT AT ALL, MISS DRAKE.

SHE CLOSED THE DOOR, LEANED BACK DISTRACTEDLY AGAINST IT, AND FROWNED...

I WONDER IF I OVERPLAYED MY HAND WALKING OUT LIKE THIS? I WOULDN'T WANT HIM TO THINK I'M A CHEAP FEMALE WOLF ON THE PROWL. HE LOOKS SO PROPER AND PRUDISH, I WOULDN'T STAND A CHANCE IF HE THOUGHT THAT!

THEN PEARL GRINNED. SHE WALKED SLOWLY ACROSS THE LIVING ROOM, HER VOLUPTUOUS FIGURE SWAYING SENSUOUSLY...

BUT HE IS A MAN! HE'S GOT ALL OF THE INSTINCTS OF A MAN. I'LL BET HE CAN'T GET ME OFF HIS MIND!

SHE STOPPED AT THE DESK, HER MIND RACING... SCHEMING. PLANNING HER NEXT MOVE. SHE FINGERED THE DISPOSSESS NOTICE SHE'D RECEIVED IN THE MORNING MAIL...

THEY'VE GIVEN ME A WEEK TO FORK OVER THREE HUNDRED DOLLARS RENT, OR OUT ON THE STREET I GO. AND I HAVEN'T GOT IT. I HAVEN'T GOT HALF THAT MUCH!

PEARL PONDERED HER PROBLEM ANOTHER MOMENT AND THEN, WITH HER LOVELY FACE ASSUMING A DETERMINED AIR, SHE HURRIED INTO THE BEDROOM TO DRESS...

MR. HOWARD ELLIS IS MY ONLY OUT! I'VE GOT TO GET HIM... ONE WAY OR THE OTHER!

THE ELEVATOR OPERATOR EYED HER UP AND DOWN AND GRINNED LASCIVIOUSLY WHEN SHE ASKED HIM THE INFORMATION SHE NEEDED. IT WAS OBVIOUS HE'D HEARD OF HER FLIGHT...

I'D LIKE TO FIND OUT WHAT MR ELLIS DOES FOR A LIVING? WHAT FIRM HE WORKS FOR?

WHY DON'T YOU FIND OUT WHAT I CAN DO, INSTEAD, HONEY?

PEARL KNEW WHEN TO ACT HAUGHTY AND INDIGNANT. UNDER OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES, THE ELEVATOR OPERATOR MIGHT HAVE AROUSED HER INTERESTS, BUT NOW...

WHY, YOU FRESH...



SHE STOOD PROUD AND TRIUMPHANT AS HE RUBBED HIS BEET-RED CHEEK WHERE SHE'D SLAPPED IT. THEN, SHE COLDLY REPEATED...

I ASKED YOU IF YOU KNEW MR. ELLIS'S BUSINESS!

HE... HE'S A STOCK BROKER. I... THINK HE HAS HIS OWN FIRM!



PEARL CROSSED THE LOBBY TO THE PHONE BOOTHS AND SCANNED THE CITY DIRECTORY...

ELLEN... ELLER... ELLIS. AH, HERE IT IS! HOWARD ELLIS AND ASSOCIATES, INC., STOCK BROKERS, INVESTMENT COUNSELORS, 231 WALL STREET...



OUTSIDE THE LUXURIOUS APARTMENT, PEARL CONTEMPLATED HAILING A CAB, THEN CONSIDERED HER WANING FINANCES, AND WALKED UP THE SIDE STREET TO THE SUBWAY. SHE RODE UNCOMFORTABLY IN THE CROWDED ROARING CHASM, HER DAINTY NOSE TWITCHING SCORNFULLY AT THE SUFFOCATING SCENT OF THE HUMANITY SURROUNDING HER. SHE TRIED TO LOSE HERSELF IN HER PLAN OF STRATEGY...

I'LL WAIT FOR HIM OUTSIDE THE BUILDING AT LUNCH HOUR. OF COURSE IT WILL BE AN ACCIDENTAL MEETING



AT NOON, PEARL WAS AT THE ENTRANCE TO 231 WALL STREET, HER CAMPAIGN FOR THE CONQUEST OF THE UNSUSPECTING MR. ELLIS CRYSTAL-CLEAR IN HER MIND...

I'LL CON HIM INTO TAKING ME TO LUNCH AND HE'LL SEE I'M NO CHEAP DAME! HE'LL SEE I GOT HIGH-CLASS TASTES! HE'LL... OH-OH! HERE HE COMES... AND HERE I GO...



I BEG YOUR PARDON, MA'AM! I DIDN'T SEE...

I'M SORRY! IT WAS ALL MY FAULT! I... WHY, IT'S MR. ELLIS!



MR. ELLIS! THIS IS A COINCIDENCE, RUNNING INTO YOU LIKE THIS. OH, BUT YOU DON'T RECOGNIZE ME IN MY CLOTHES, DO YOU? I MEAN THESE CLOTHES. REMEMBER? THIS MORNING? PEARL DRAKE? THE PENTHOUSE APARTMENT ACROSS THE HALL?

OH, YES... MISS DRAKE. AND THE STOPPED WATCH!



BEFORE HOWARD COULD OBJECT, PEARL STEERED HIM TO A TAXI, TOOK HIS HAND, AND LED HIM INTO IT AFTER HER...

YOU DO REMEMBER! WELL, I OWE YOU SOMETHING FOR BEING SO KIND THIS MORNING, MR. ELLIS. I'M TAKING YOU TO LUNCH. THE PLAZA, DRIVER!

THE PLAZA?? BUT THAT'S WAY UPTOWN, MISS DRAKE...



BY THE TIME THEY'D PLOWED UPTOWN THROUGH THE TRAFFIC AND ARRIVED AT THE SWANK PLAZA DINING ROOM, PEARL'S EBULLIENT DISPOSITION HAD WARMED THE SHY MILLIONAIRE...

VICHY SOISSE, HOWARD, AND THE ROAST PHEASANT UNDER GLASS SOUNDS DELICIOUS...

HAVE YOU GOT THAT, WAITER? I'LL HAVE A HAM SANDWICH ON WHOLE WHEAT TOAST AND A GLASS OF MILK



THROUGH THE MEAL, PEARL CAREFULLY ENCOURAGED HOWARD. BY DESSERT, HE WAS STRUGGLING TO SAY SOMETHING. BY POUSSE-CAFÉ, HE'D FINALLY SUMMONED UP THE COURAGE TO PUT HIS HAND ON HERS AND BLURT...

PEARL... GULP... MAY I TAKE YOU TO DINNER AND A SHOW... TONIGHT?

OH, I'D ADORE THAT, HOWARD!



AND THAT NIGHT, AFTER THEIR DATE, THEY RETURNED TO THE PENTHOUSE FLOOR OF THE LUSH PARK AVENUE APARTMENT HOUSE. PEARL OPENED HER DOOR AND SPOKE TEMPTINGLY IN A SOFT HONEYED TONE...

WOULDN'T YOU COME IN FOR A NIGHTCAP, I HAVE A BOARD MEETING IN THE MORNING AND I MUST GET TO BED...



SO AFTER A QUICK "GOODNIGHT," PEARL FOUND HERSELF ALONE IN HER APARTMENT, FRUSTRATED AND ANNOYED.

I... I MUST BE LOSING MY TOUCH!



BUT HOWARD ELLIS PHONED PEARL THE NEXT DAY FROM HIS OFFICE AND HER CONFIDENCE IN HER EVENTUAL SUCCESS WAS RESTORED...

WELL, PEARL? WHAT SHALL IT BE TONIGHT?

IT'S SUCH A LOVELY NIGHT, HOWIE, I'D RATHER NOT BE INDOORS. LET'S TAKE A HANSOM THROUGH THE PARK!



PEARL KNEW WHERE TO FIND ATMOSPHERE CONGENIAL TO ROMANCE. THE RIDE THROUGH THE PARK IN THE HANSOM CAB WAS JUST WHAT THE DOCTOR HAD ORDERED. SOON, HOWARD WAS HOLDING HER HAND AND WHISPERING SOFTLY...

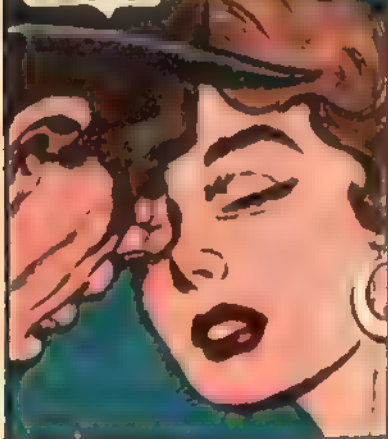
IT IS A LOVELY NIGHT, PEARL... BUT NOT NEARLY AS LOVELY AS YOU ARE!

WHY, HOWARD...



PEARL WAS AN OLD HAND AT THIS GAME OF TRAPPING A MAN. SHE KNEW HOW TO PRESS HER ADVANTAGE... HOW TO MOVE HER SOFT FULL-LIPS CLOSE TO HIS... INVITING...

OH PEARL



AND SHE KNEW HOW TO ACT SHY AND COY AND SURPRISED WHEN HE'D FINALLY FALLEN INTO HER LITTLE TRAP...

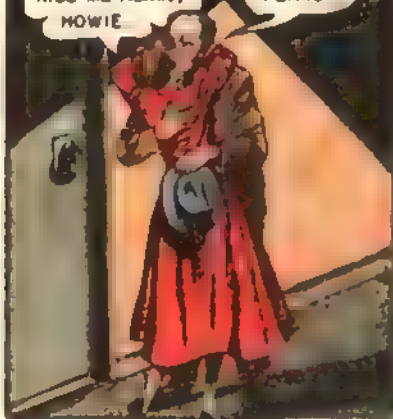
I-I'M SORRY, PEARL! I SHOULDN'T HAVE DONE THAT... I... I DIDN'T MIND, HOWIE! I... I'M VERY FOND OF YOU!



SOON THEY WERE BACK OUTSIDE HER APARTMENT. PEARL LEANED AGAINST HER DOOR, FINGERING HOWARD'S COAT LAPEL AND GENTLY, GENTLY DRAWING HIM AGAINST HER QUIVERING BODY... WHISPERING...

KISS ME AGAIN, HOWIE

PEARL



SHE KISSED HIM WITH MOIST RAVISHING HUNGRY LIPS. SHE KISSED HIM AS SHE KNEW HE'D NEVER BEEN KISSED BEFORE. AND THEN SHE LEFT HIM STANDING THERE... LIMP... TREMBLING... GASPING FOR BREATH. SHE LOCKED THE DOOR BETWEEN THEM AND STOOD IN THE DARKNESS OF HER APARTMENT, GRINNING WITH SATISFACTION...

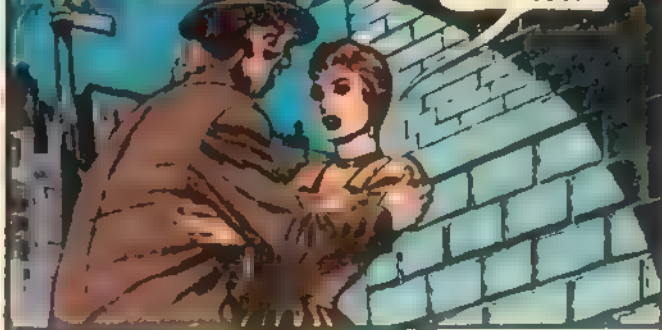
ONCE MORE LIKE THAT AND HE'LL BE BEGGING... AND IT'D BETTER BE SOON! I'VE ONLY GOT A FEW DAYS LEFT BEFORE I GET KICKED OUT!



IT WAS WARM THE NEXT EVENING. THERE WAS NO MOON AND THE SKY HUNG DARK OVERHEAD. PEARL COULD SENSE THE DEEP TENSION IN HOWARD AS THEY WALKED HOME. SHE WAITED PATIENTLY. FINALLY, HE STOPPED BENEATH A LAMP POST AND HE SAW A NEW EAGER DETERMINED LOOK IN HIS EYES...

PEARL! I... I... I NEED YOU! I WANT YOU!

OH, HOWARD! IF YOU ONLY KNEW HOW MUCH I NEED YOU!



SHE WATCHED THIS WEALTHY MILQUETOAST PULL HIMSELF TOGETHER MANFULLY. SHE LISTENED, SHOCKED, TO THE WORDS HE CAREFULLY ENOUNCED IN A FIRM, ALMOST FORMAL MANNER.

PEARL, I WANT YOU FOR MY WIFE!

WHAT??



THIS WAS BEYOND PEARL'S WILDEST DREAMS. HAD SHE HEARD RIGHT? WAS THIS A PROPOSAL? NOW IT WAS PEARL WHO WAS NERVOUS. THIS CHARACTER WAS PLAYING FOR KEEPS. NOT FOR A MONTH, A YEAR. FOREVER. SHE HAD TO ASK HIM AGAIN.

HOWARD, ARE YOU SURE? YOU DON'T KNOW ME!

I KNOW YOU WELL ENOUGH TO WANT YOU FOR MY WIFE, PEARL!



PEARL WAS ECSTATIC. SHE GLOWED IN HER UNHOPED-FOR TRIUMPH, AND WHEN HE ASKED...

WILL YOU COME UP TO MY APARTMENT, PEARL?

OH, YES, HOWIE? YES

THEY WENT UP—HE, HOLDING HER HAND IN A TIGHT FEVERISH GRIP, HIS BREATHING QUICKENED WITH EXCITEMENT...AND SHE, FOLLOWING EAGERLY, ANXIOUS TO CONVINCE HIM OF HIS WISE CHOICE. ANXIOUS TO THANK HIM.

IN HERE THE BEDROOM

YES, HOWIE.

HE OPENED THE BEDROOM DOOR AND SHOVED PEARL IN. SHE HEARD THE LOCK CLICK BEHIND HIM...HEARD HIS LOW THROATED GIGGLE. SHE PEERED INTO THE GLOOM.

ESTHER? I BROUGHT ANOTHER ONE...

ESTHER!? WHO'S SHE?

AND THEN PEARL SAW THE COFFIN IN THE GLOOM...THE OLD COFFIN WITH THE LID SQUEAKING OPEN...THE PALID WHITE FIGURE RISING FROM IT...BITS OF EARTH DROPPING FROM ITS FLOWING BLACK CAPE...THE RAZOR-SHARP SNAKE-LIKE FANGS...THE DOZING SPITTLE

MY GOD! WHAT IS IT, HOWIE? WHAT IS IT?

THIS IS MY WIFE, PEARL! SHE'S A VAMPIRE!

HOWARD PUSHED PEARL TOWARD THE FROTHING, CRAVING, DEOUS CREATURE

I TOLD YOU I WANTED YOU FOR MY WIFE!

NO! NO! OH, LORD!

AND HOWARD SAT DOWN AND WATCHED WITH SATISFACTION AS HIS LIVING-DEAD WIFE SPRANG UPON THIS LATEST DESERVING VICTIM. HE'D BROUGHT HE LISTENED EAGERLY TO HER GLUTTONOUS SLURPING NOISES. HE NODDED APPROVINGLY AS THE PINK GLOW CAME BACK INTO HER SUNKEN CHEEKS, AND PEARL'S WRITHING BODY GREW PALER AND PALER AND PALER.

SO POOR PEARL FINALLY FOUND HER LAST HUSBAND-SUCKER! ONLY IN THIS CASE, IT WAS THE HUSBAND'S WIFE WHO WAS THE SUCKER...BLOOD-SUCKER, THAT IS! HEH, HEH! WELL, THE OLD WITCH AWAITS WITH ANOTHER OF HER CREEPY CAULDRON-CONGOCTIONS SO I'LL STEP ASIDE WHILE SHE SLINGS SLIME AT YOU. BY THE WAY, I HEAR SOME PEOPLE FINALLY JOINED THE

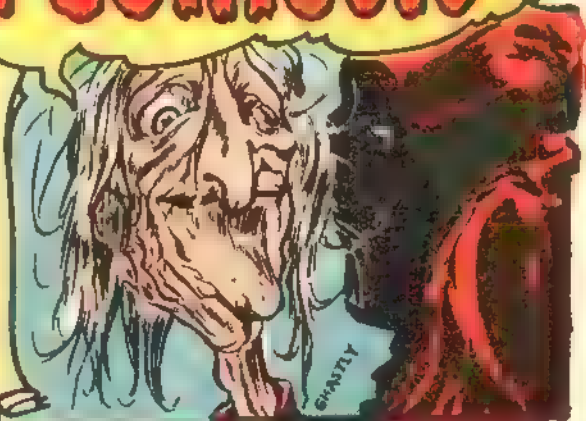
E.G. FAN-ADDICT CLUB. THAT'S GOOD NEWS! I WAS BEGINNING TO BE AFRAID THE MEMBERSHIP WAS GOING TO BE LIMITED TO...ER... THINGS, SHALL WE SAY? 'BEE' NOW, PEOPLE TOO! WELL, WHAT'D'YA KNOW! 'BYE!

THE WITCH'S CAULDRON!

HEE, HEE! COME IN, CREEPS. YOU'RE IN THE RIGHT PLACE FOR RETCHING... THE HAUNT OF FEAR. AND, NOW DIEU! (THAT'S FRENCH, PIENOS!). HAVE I GOT A REVOLTING TALE FOR YOU. WANT TO KNOW WHAT'S COOKING IN MY CRUDDY CAST-IRON CAULDRON? WELL, YOUR OLD WITCH HAS A GORY SLAB OF GRISLY GAB ABOUT A TERROR TIME AND A FAST OPERATOR WHO BROUGHT A MESSY MATTER TO A HEAD AND CUT IT OFF THERE! SO WIPE THE DROOL FROM YOUR CHINS, BEND YOUR FLOPPY EARS THIS WAY, AND LISTEN TO THIS DELIGHTFUL TALE OF BUTCHERY CALLED...

The Sliceman Cometh

THAT 10TH OF MARCH, 1793, WAS GRIM AND GREY WITH RAIN THREATENING IN THE OMINOUS BLACK CLOUDS THAT BILLOWED OVERHEAD. A RAW WIND HOWLED FURIOUSLY ABOUT THE CRIMSON-STAINED GUILLOTINE, BUT IT COULD NOT CLEAR THE BEFOULED AIR OF ITS ABATOIR AROMA. UNDERFOOT, COBBLE-STONES WERE SLIPPERY WITH CONGEALING GORE, WHILE FRESH WARM BLOOD BUBBLED IN A CONSTANT FLOW DOWN THE GUTTERS AS THE GREAT BLADE HISSED DOWN AGAIN AND AGAIN, HEAPING THE BASKET WITH WIDE-EYED NOBLE HEADS. THERE, CALMLY, STOOD THE MAN OF THE HOUR, THE EXECUTIONER, **ANDRE VACHE**, AMID THE JEERING, HOOTING, RED-BONNETED CITIZENRY, READING AN URGENT MESSAGE JUST HANDED TO HIM.



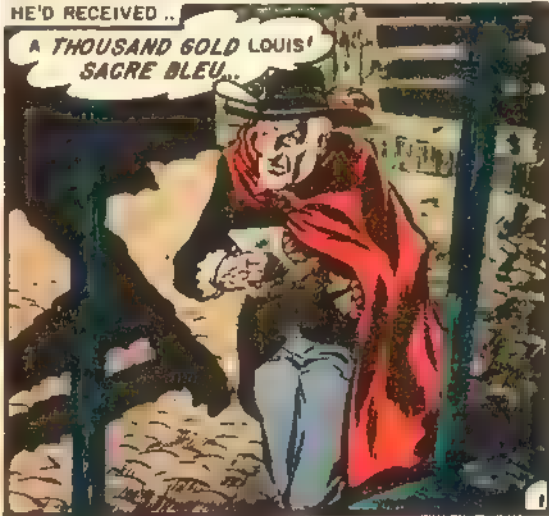
"AND IF A THOUSAND GOLD LOUIS INTEREST YOU, THEN VISIT ME AT 49 RUE DUBOIS." HMMM! PIERRE, I MUST LEAVE! CARRY ON FOR ME, EH?

A PLEASURE, ANDRE...



AS ANDRE HURRIED AWAY FROM THE AWFUL SCENE... HIS BLOOD-SOAKED SHOES LEAVING RED IMPRINTS ON THE PAVING STONES... HE EAGERLY RE-READ THE NOTE HE'D RECEIVED...

A THOUSAND GOLD LOUIS! SAGRE BLEU...



SOON, THE EXECUTIONER WAS BEING
LED INTO A SPACIOUS ROOM OF
49 RUE DUBOIS BY A VEHAL-LOOKING
MAN WITH AN UNCTUOUS MANNER
ABOUT HIM...

AH, M'SIEU VACHE! I AM JEAN
CORBEAU. IT IS A GREAT
HONOR INDEED TO HAVE SO
IMPORTANT AND DISTINGUISHED
A VISITOR AS YOU IN MY HOME...

YOU MENTIONED
SOMETHING ABOUT
ONE THOUSAND
GOLD LOUIS,
CITIZEN
CORBEAU. THAT
IS WHY I AM
HERE

MAKE YOUR-
SELF COM-
FORTABLE,
M'SIEU. HERE...
SOME OF THE
FINEST WINE
FROM MY CELLAR.
AND NOW... I
WILL EXPLAIN
WHY I SENT FOR
YOU...

ACTUALLY, THIS HOUSE IS NOT
MINE. IT BELONGS TO MY BROTHER
CLAUDE... BEING THE ELDER, MY
FATHER LEFT HIM EVERYTHING...
A FORTUNE, M'SIEU. SHOULD ANY-
THING HAPPEN TO CLAUDE, I'D
GET IT ALL. YOU UNDERSTAND?



YOU WANT ME TO RID
YOU OF YOUR BROTHER,
CITIZEN CORBEAU?
BAPRISTI...YOU INSINUATE
I WOULD MURDER A MAN...
EVEN FOR THAT MUCH
GOLD?

NOT MURDER. NOW AM I
MERELY AN ACCUSATION...
TO THE RIGHT PARTIES...
AND THE HEAD OF
ANOTHER ROYALIST
SYMPATHIZER WOULD
ROLL INTO YOUR BASKET.

AH, THAT IS A DIFFERENT STORY,
M'SIEU CORBEAU. IF YOUR BROTHER
IS ONE OF THEM... A ROYALIST...
THEN I WILL BE GLAD TO EXPOSE
HIM. IT WOULD BE MY DUTY!

YOU ARE A WISE
MAN, M'SIEU VACHE.
DO NOT THINK I AM
NOT FOND OF MY
BROTHER. BUT THERE
ARE TWO THINGS I
LOVE MORE... FRANCE...
AND MONEY!



HERE IS HALF THE PAYMENT...
500 GOLD LOUIS. YOU WILL
RECEIVE THE REST WHEN I HAVE
PROOF THAT MY BROTHER HAS
BEEN EXECUTED! SO MANY
HEADS FALL THESE DAYS...

YOU SHALL HAVE
UNDENIABLE
EVIDENCE,
CITIZEN CORBEAU!
I WILL SEE TO
IT! AND NOW, BON
SOIR...

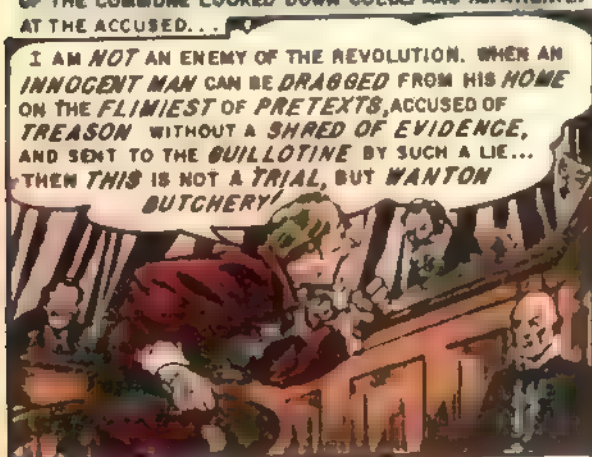
AND SO, THAT VERY DAY, ANDRE VACHE MADE HIS ACCUSATION...

I HAVE IT FROM HIS OWN BROTHER'S LIPS,
CITIZEN MARAT! CLAUDE CORBEAU IS IN
FULL SYMPATHY WITH THE NOBILITY,
DESPISES THE NEWLY-FORMED
REPUBLIC AND WOULD BETRAY IT
AT THE FIRST OPPORTUNITY...

ORDER
THE
ARREST
OF CLAUDE
CORBEAU!



THE NEXT DAY, CITIZEN MARAT AND SIX OTHER JUDGES OF THE COMMUNE LOOKED DOWN COLDLY AND IMPATIENTLY AT THE ACCUSED...



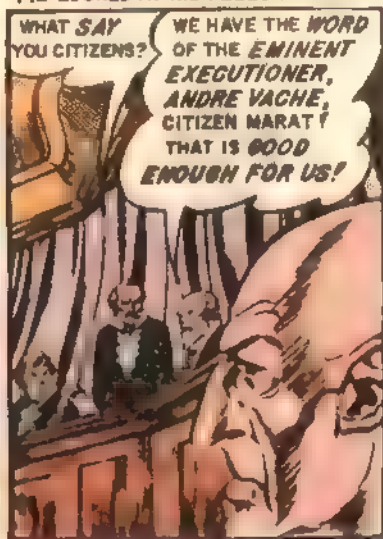
I AM **NOT** AN ENEMY OF THE REVOLUTION. WHEN AN **INNOCENT MAN** CAN BE **DRAWN** FROM HIS **HOME** ON THE **FLIMSIEST** OF **PRETEXTS**, ACCUSED OF **TREASON** WITHOUT A **SHRED** OF **EVIDENCE**, AND SENT TO THE **GUILLOTINE** BY SUCH A **LIE**... THEN **THIS** IS NOT A **TRIAL**, BUT **WANTON BUTCHERY!**

CITIZEN MARAT HELD UP HIS HAND AND A HUSH FELL OVER THE CHAMBER. THEN, SCOWLING DARKLY AT THE ACCUSED, HE WHISPERED...



THIS IS YOUR **DEFENSE**, M'SIEU COURBEAU... THAT WE ARE **BUTCHERS** BECAUSE WE **DESTROY** OUR **ENEMIES**?

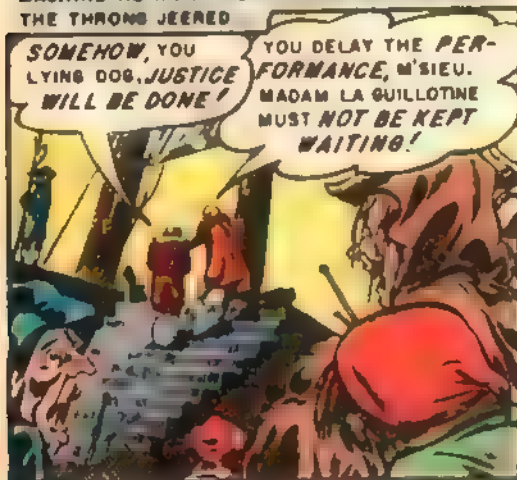
HE LOOKED AT HIS FELLOW JUDGES.



WHAT SAY YOU CITIZENS?

WE HAVE THE **WORD** OF THE **EMINENT EXECUTIONER**, **ANDRE VACHE**, CITIZEN MARAT! THAT IS **GOOD ENOUGH** FOR US!

ANDRE VACHE LED CLAUDE TO THE MONSTROUS MACHINE AS KNITTING NEEDLES CLICKED AND THE THROAT JEERED



SOMEHOW, YOU LYING DOG, **JUSTICE** WILL BE **DONE**!

YOU DELAY THE **PERFORMANCE**, M'SIEU. MADAM LA **GUILLOTINE** MUST **NOT** BE **KEPT WAITING**!

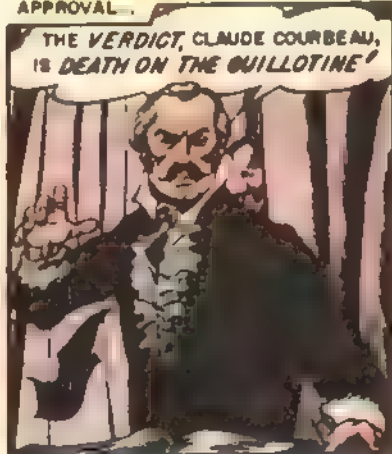
THE CHAMBER, THROWN WITH ANGRY RAGGED CITIZENS, SHOOK WITH THE HOARSE CLAMORING FOR STILL ANOTHER HEAD...



HE EVEN **SPEAKS** LIKE THE **NOBILITY**!

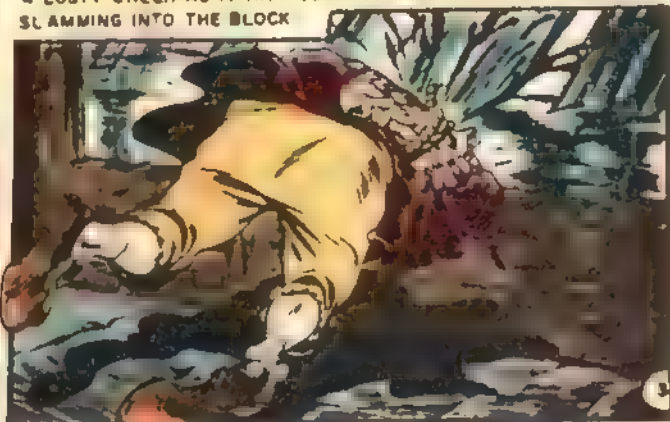
DEATH! DEATH!

CITIZEN MARAT RAISED HIS HAND AND DROPPED A SQUARE OF **BLACK CREPE**... AND WITH THIS SYMBOLIC GESTURE, THE CROWD ROARED ITS **APPROVAL**...



THE **VERDICT**, CLAUDE COURBEAU, IS **DEATH ON THE GUILLOTINE**!

THE RED-BONNETED CROWD WAITED IN TENSE SILENCE AS THE HEAVY KNIFE WAS HOISTED HIGH BETWEEN THE SLOTTED PARALLEL BEAMS. THEN, WITH A WHINING CRESCENDO TO ACCOMPANY THE RAZOR-SHARP BLADE'S DESCENT, THE CROWD EXPLODED IN A LUSTY CHEER AS IT HIT CUTTING THROUGH FLESH AND BONE... SLAMMING INTO THE BLOCK



ANDRE CAUGHT CLAUDE'S HEAD IN A SACK AS HOT BLOOD SPURTED FROM THE SEVERED VEINS AND ARTERIES OF THE DECAPITATED BODY, SPRAYING HIS FACE AND CLOTHES. HE HELD UP THE HEAD-HEAVY SACK WITH A TRIUMPHANT GRIN. THE CROWD SCREAMED...



HE MOVED THROUGH THE SILENT DESERTED STREETS, HEARING THE CHEERS FROM THE GUILLOTINE SQUARE AND THINKING ONLY OF THE GOLD HE HAD EARNED. BEFORE LONG, HE ARRIVED AT 40 RUE DU BOIS...



YOU ASKED FOR PROOF, CITIZEN COURBEAU?

AN... YOU BROUGHT MY BROTHER'S CLOTHES?

ANDRE VACHE REACHED INTO THE SACK, PULLED FORTH ITS CONTENTS, AND HELD IT DANGLING BY THE HAIR



BETTER THAN THAT. I BROUGHT THIS! LOOK!

CHOKES.

JEAN COURBEAU TURNED SICKLY GREEN. HE WHIMPERED SOFTLY...

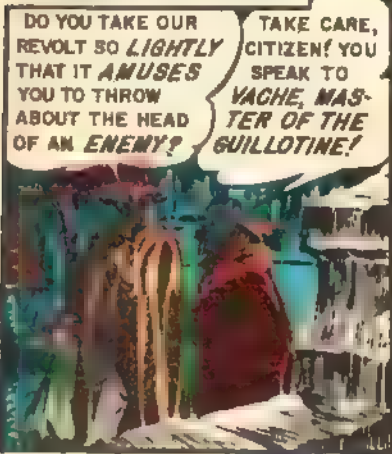


TAKE YOUR MONEY! HERE! GASP! GET... GET IT OUT OF HERE! CHOKES... GET RID OF IT!

ANDRE WENT LIGHT-HEARTEDLY THROUGH THE EVENING STREETS, THE GOLD JINGLING IN HIS POCKETS, THE SACK SWINGING MERRILY AT HIS SIDE. A COACH RUMBLING BY, AND HE PLAYFULLY TOSSED THE RED-SOAKED BAG THROUGH ITS WINDOW...



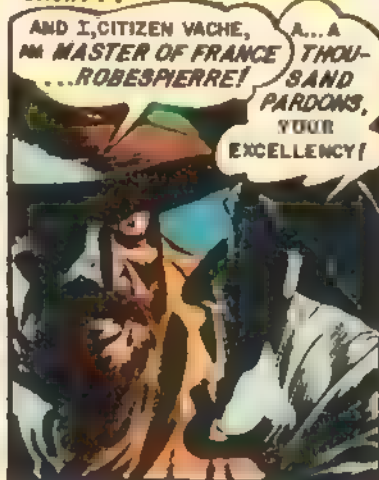
THE COACH STOPPED. A TALL MAN GOT OUT AND CARRIED THE GORY BUNDLE BACK TO ANDRE...



DO YOU TAKE OUR REVOLT SO LIGHTLY THAT IT AMUSES YOU TO THROW ABOUT THE HEAD OF AN ENEMY?

TAKE CARE, CITIZEN! YOU SPEAK TO VACHE, MASTER OF THE GUILLOTINE!

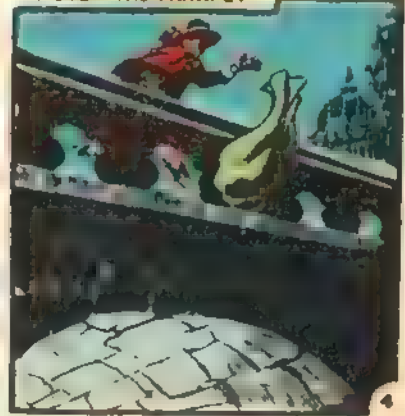
THE MAN HANDED ANDRE THE SACK...



AND I, CITIZEN VACHE, AM MASTER OF FRANCE... ROBESPIERRE!

A... A THOUSAND PARDONS, YOUR EXCELLENCY!

THE COACH RUMBLING OFF AND ANDRE WALKED ON, DETERMINED TO RID HIMSELF OF THE HEAD. AS HE CROSSED ONE OF THE SEINE BRIDGES, HE TOSSED IT OVER THE PARAPET



ANDRE DID NOT SEE THE SACK LAND IN THE BOTTOM OF A SKIFF THAT CAME FROM UNDER THE BRIDGE ARCH. THE HEAD ROLLED OUT AND THE FISHERMEN GASPED.



NOM DU CHIEN! WHAT KIND OF FIENDISH JOKE IS THIS?

LOOK! IT IS VACHE, THE EXECUTIONER!

I WAS IN THE SQUARE WHEN HE GOT THIS HEAD TODAY, HENRI! HE HELD IT UP FOR ALL TO SEE HE WAS VERY PROUD OF IT! IT MUST HAVE BEEN SOMEONE VERY SPECIAL!



THEN HE DROPPED IT ACCIDENTALLY! COME, EDOUARD WE WILL PUT OURSELVES IN GOOD WITH HIM BY RETURNING IT!

WHEN ANDRE RETURNED TO HIS ROOMING HOUSE, HE WAS GREETED BY HIS LANDLADY, MADAME BARETTE...

TWO CITIZENS LEFT THIS FOR YOU, M'SIEU VACHE!

NO! NO! IT IS IMPOSSIBLE.



ANDRE HURRIED OUT INTO THE STREET WITH THE BLOOD-SOAKED BAG. HE STOPPED OVER A SEWER-GRAPE...

EH, BIEN, CLAUDE COURBEAU! SO THEY PLAY GAMES WITH US! WELL, PERHAPS THE RATS DOWN THERE WILL FIND YOU TEMPTING...



THE HEAD DROPPED TO ANDRE'S FEET AS IT TORE THROUGH THE SACK'S BLOOD-ROTTED BOTTOM. THE CLOTH DISAPPEARED INTO THE DANK-REEKING DARKNESS. ANDRE HESITATED, STUPIDLY, AS AN OXCART, HEAPED WITH HEADLESS CORPSES, ROUNDED THE CORNER...

VACHE! IT IS GOOD TO SEE YOU! LOOK! RECOGNIZE SOME OF YOUR CUSTOMERS?

TAKE THEM AWAY, BODIN! GO BURY THEM!



ANDRE STOOD OVER THE GRINNING HEAD, HIDING IT FROM THE CART-DRIVER'S VIEW...

I'M IN NO HURRY, VACHE. LET US STOP FOR A DRINK! OUR HEADLESS FRIENDS CAN WAIT!

LET ME ALONE, BODIN! GO BURY YOUR FOUL-SMELLING DEAD!



BODIN SHRUGGED AND THE OX-CART RUMBLLED OFF. ANDRE TURNED TO THE HEAD, ANGRY AND FRUSTRATED. HE REACHED FOR IT SAVAGELY...

TORMENT ME, WILL YOU, CLAUDE GOURBEAU! WELL, WE'LL SEE ABOUT THAT!



THE EXECUTIONER CAME UPON A MARKET OPEN LATE AND LIT DIMLY BY OIL LAMPS. HE PASSED THE STALLS OF FRUITS AND VEGETABLES AND SMILED AT THE JOKE HE MADE...

NOW, M'SIEU NOBODY, IN AMONG THE CABBAGES WITH YOU. *BEHAVE*, AND PERHAPS YOU WILL END UP IN SOMEONE'S SOUP...

FREE AT LAST OF HIS FRIGHTFUL BURDEN, ANDRE CELEBRATED HIS NEW-FOUND FORTUNE AT AN INN WITH A GLASS OF BRANDY. THEN HE RETURNED HOME AND, MEETING HIS LANDLADY, GOOD-NATUREDLY RELIEVED HER OF HER SHOPPING BASKET...

BONSOIR, MADAME BARETTE! PERMIT ME!

YOU ARE A GENTLEMAN, M'SIEU VACHE!

THEY ENTERED THE ROOMING HOUSE TOGETHER AND WENT INTO THE KITCHEN...

YOU SEEM IN A JOVIAL MOOD TONIGHT, CITIZEN VACHE!

I HAVE COME INTO SOME WEALTH AND I...I...CHOKE...

CLAUDE COURBEAU'S HEAD GRINNED UP AT ANDRE FROM AMONG THE VEGETABLES. MADAM BARETTE EMPTIED OUT ONTO THE KITCHEN TABLE...

SACRE DIEU! IT'S BACK!

WHAT IS BACK, M'SIEU VACHE! WHA...GULP...
EEEEEEAAAGH!

THE LANDLADY MOANED AND TURNED AWAY, SICK. ANDRE, SHAKING UNCONTROLLABLY, FLUNG OPEN THE SHUTTERS AND THREW THE GARGOYLE-LIKE SKULL INTO THE DARK STREET BELOW...

GAGG

STAY AWAY FROM ME. YOU HEAR? STAY AWAY!

A MOMENT LATER, MONSIEUR ETIENNE, ANOTHER BOARDER, ENTERED. ON HIS DOUR FACE, A LOOK MORE OF PATHOS THAN ANGER... IN HIS HAND, THE HEAD...

IT IS NOT THAT YOU *STRUCK* ME WITH THIS, VACHE! IT IS THAT YOU HAVE SO LITTLE RESPECT FOR THE DEAD THAT HURTS...

NO! NO! NOT AGAIN!

ANDRE FUMED. THE BLOOD DRAINING FROM HIS FACE HE SEIZED A CLEAVER FROM THE TABLE. THEN TURNED AND SNATCHED THE HEAD FROM MONSIEUR ETIENNE...

I'LL DESTROY IT! I'LL CHOP IT TO BITS! THERE'LL BE NO HEAD TO RETURN WHEN I'M THROUGH WITH IT!

ANDRE STUMBLED TO HIS ROOM AND WITH A RAGE THAT VERGED ON MADNESS, HE KNEELED ON THE FLOOR AND HACKED AT THE LIFELESS FLESH AND BONE UNTIL HE'D REDUCED IT INTO AN UNRECOGNIZABLE HEAP OF MINCE-MEAT...



THEN, WEAK AND EXHAUSTED, HIS INTESTINES ROILING AND QUIVERING LIKE JELLY, THE EXECUTIONER SANK ON HIS BED IN A COMA-LIKE STUPOR.



AN HOUR PASSED. PARIS WAS ASLEEP. THE NIGHT WAS STILL, EXCEPT FOR AN OX-CART THAT RUMBLED BY BELOW. ANDRE STIRRED AT ITS NOISE AND SAT UP. HE LISTENED TO THE FRONT DOOR OPEN...THE HEAVY DRAGGING FOOTSTEPS ON THE STAIRS...THE KNOB OF HIS OWN DOOR TURN... AND THEN...



THE HEADLESS CORPSE STUMBLED TOWARD ANDRE, ITS HAND GESTICULATING TOWARD ITS NECK, POINTING...



THE DECAPITATED BODY HESITATED, AS IF BEWILDERED AS TO WHAT TO DO. THEN IT DRAGGED FORWARD AGAIN... REACHING FOR ANDRE...REACHING... REACHING...



MADAME BARETTE HEARD THE EAR-SPLITTING SCREAM THAT ECHOED THROUGH HER ROOMING HOUSE AND RUSHED TO ANDRE'S ROOM WITH A CANDLE. BUT AS SHE REACHED THE DOOR, IT OPENED. THE BODY OF CLAUDE COURBEAU STUMBLED OUT, AND ON ITS SHOULDERS, CRIMSON DRIPPING FROM ITS TORN AND RUPTURED BLOOD VESSELS, SAT THE SAVAGELY TORN-OFF HEAD OF ANDRE VACHE...



HEE, HEE! WELL, THAT'S ONE WAY TO GET AHEAD IN THE WORLD, EH, KIDDIES? AND NOW, IT'S TIME TO CLOSE C.K.'S MUCK-MAG FOR THIS ISSUE! HOPE YOU WEREN'T GORED STIFF! WE'LL ALL SEE YOU NEXT IN THE VAULT OF HORROR... WHEN WE'LL BE HEADING

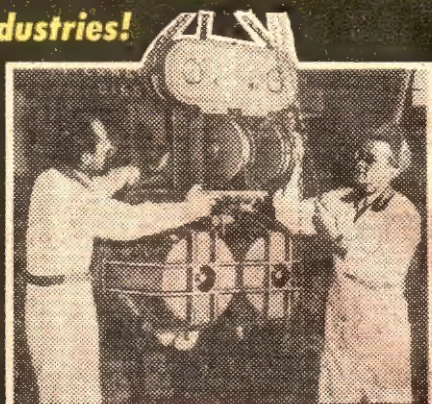


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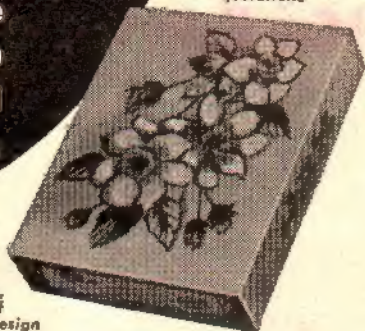
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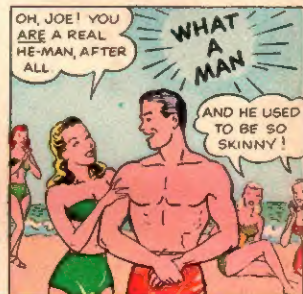
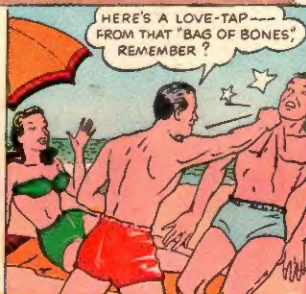
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